OPPORTUNITY MATTERS: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF SOCIOECONOMIC STANDING, MASCULINITY, AND CONCURRENCY AMONG BLACK MEN

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ABSTRACT

Andre L. Brown: Opportunity Matters: A Mixed-Methods Study of Socioeconomic Standing,
Masculinity, and Concurrency among Black Men
(Under the direction of Wizdom Powell)

Background: Black men's (BM) increased HIV risk is not fully explained by individual-level risk factors such as no condom use during sex. Their sexual networks--featuring high concentrations of concurrency--have been identified as social structural pathways to HIV disparities. Sociodemographics, like socioeconomic standing (SS) and sexual orientation, and masculinities have previously been identified as drivers of BM's concurrency. Conscious of these factors, this dissertation used quantitative data from the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) (n=1709) to explore the direct and moderated relationship between BM's concurrency and their levels of respectability masculinity (SS and sexual orientation) and traditional masculinity ideologies. The dissertation also used qualitative (focus group) data from the Sexual Concurrency Media Study (N=3) to explore the influence of masculinities and personal values on BM's relationship satisfaction, stress-coping behaviors, and concurrency; and the underlying cognitions and affective experiences shaping BM's concurrency.

Methods: An SS-index was created using financial-based measures in the NSFG. Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to derive a measure reflecting men's level of traditional masculinity ideologies. Multiple logistic regression was used to model men's odds of concurrency. Directed content analysis was used to analyze focus group transcripts.

Results: Direct effects analyses revealed that greater odds of concurrency was significantly associated with: lower SS; traditional gender conforming (TGC) orientation; and higher endorsement of heteronormative traditional masculinity ideologies. Moderated effects analyses revealed: SS moderated the association between sexual orientation and concurrency resulting in greater odds of concurrency for TGC and traditional gender non-conforming (TGNC) BM and heteronormative traditional masculinity ideologies moderated the association between sexual orientation and concurrency resulting in greater odds of concurrency for TGC and TGNC BM. Qualitative analyses results revealed that relationship dissatisfaction; supportive community norms; sociodemographics; and cognitions, despite affective experiences all impact BM's concurrency.

Conclusions/Implications: BM's concurrency and HIV risk are impacted by masculinities and socioeconomic factors, albeit in unexpected ways. Addressing these in future research and interventions might enhance existing efforts designed to reduce BM's disproportionate HIV burden.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Black men in the United States experience poor health outcomes from numerous chronic health conditions. On average, Black men in the U.S. live approximately 5 to 7 years less than their White-non-Hispanic and Hispanic counterparts (Murphy, Kochanek, Xu, & Heron, 2015). Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection is a chronic health condition that disproportionately impacts the health and life expectancy of Black men. HIV rates among Black men are twice that of Hispanic men and six times greater than that of White men. One in 16 Black men will contract HIV during their lifetime (CDC, 2016a). Additionally, Black men have higher rates of HIV infections that progress to AIDS and higher AIDS-related deaths when compared to men from other racial/ethnic groups (CDC, 2016b). Black men account for over 70% of new infections among all Blacks -- the racial/ethnic group at greatest risk for HIV-infection (CDC, 2016b).

While HIV morbidity and mortality disproportionately impacts all Black men, Black men who have sex with men (MSM) are especially burdened by HIV. Black MSM account for the largest majority of HIV infection among Black men (CDC, 2016b). Black men who have sex with men and women (MSMW) are five times more likely to be living with HIV than heterosexual Black men (Friedman et al., 2014). If current HIV diagnoses rates persist, it is estimated that 1 in 2 Black MSM will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetime (CDC, 2016c). Given the disproportionate impact of HIV on Black men's lives, it is important to identify factors driving HIV morbidity among this population and reasons that HIV morbidity burdens

some Black men (i.e., MSM and MSMW) more severely than others. Identifying the factors driving HIV morbidity among Black men can help to inform the development of prevention strategies to lessen the HIV burden that Black men bear.

Prevention strategies that have achieved success in reducing new HIV infections among high-risk groups have not translated into decreased HIV burden among Black men. Black heterosexual men continue to comprise the largest proportion of new HIV diagnoses among heterosexual men of all races/ethnicities in the United States (CDC, 2016a). Additionally, from 2005-2014, the number of new HIV diagnoses declined for Blacks as a group. However, during that same time period, the number of new diagnoses increased 22% for Black MSM (CDC, 2016c). In recent years, Black MSM's increased rate of new diagnoses has stabilized (CDC, 2016c). Recent HIV epidemiological data suggests that local and national HIV-prevention strategies, including increasing the availability and uptake of HIV testing and anti-retroviral medications (ARVs), are responsible for the reductions in new HIV infections observed among certain high-risk groups (Embassy of the United States, 2014). However, the 1 in 2 prognosis of HIV infection for Black MSM in their lifetimes and Black men as a whole persistently having the highest rates of HIV diagnoses among all racial/ethnic groups suggest that enhanced versions of these HIV prevention strategies and/or different strategies are needed for this population (CDC, 2016a; CDC, 2016c). Moreover, previous research studies demonstrate that Blacks report higher rates of ever been tested for HIV, indicating their willingness to engage in HIV prevention strategies (CDC, 2012; Copen, Chandra, & Febo-Vasquez, 2015). There is mixed evidence about whether Blacks have equal access to and similar uptake rates of ARVs when compared to other races of people (Palacio, Kahn, Richards, & Morin, 2002). Given that access to ARVs and other

prevention services cannot fully explain Black men's disproportionate HIV rates, researchers have sought to explore other factors driving infections among this population.

Researchers have looked to individual-level risk factors, such as lack of condom use or drug use prior to sex, to better explain Black men's disproportionate HIV rates. However, these factors do not consistently occur in greater proportion among Black men and cannot fully explain their increased HIV risk when compared to men from other racial/ethnic groups. (Eaton et al., 2006; Millett, Flores, Peterson, & Bakeman, 2007; Millett, Peterson, Wolitski, & Stall, 2006; Mosher, Chandra, & Jones, 2005; Rosenberg, Sullivan, DiNenno, Salazar, & Sanchez, 2011; Siegel, Schrimshaw, Lekas, & Parsons, 2008). The studies examining racial differences in individual-level HIV risk factors find that some factors, such as higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or undetected HIV infections, occur more frequently among Black men when compared to White men (Eaton et al., 2006; Millett et al., 2006). However, most of the findings from these studies suggest that risk factors, such as receptive anal or oral sex, a high number of casual partners, or not using condoms during sex occur at the same rates or less frequently among Black men when compared to men of other races (Eaton et al., 2006; Millett et al., 2007; Millett et al., 2006; Rosenberg et al., 2011; Siegel et al., 2008).

Collectively, this information highlights the need to address factors over and above just HIV prevention service access and individual-level risk factors in order to effectively reduce observed HIV infections among Black men. Moving more upstream to investigate factors at the social structural level, which have previously been identified as driving HIV risk for Black men (Teti et al., 2012; Wade & Harper, 2015), would further enhance existing HIV prevention knowledge. Social structural level factors can include macro-social-structures, such as laws and income/resource distribution, as well as meso-social-structures like familial and other social

formations (Martikainen, Bartley, & Lahelma, 2002). Conducting research to better understand how these factors directly and indirectly place Black men at increased risk for HIV infection is one way of building a more effective evidence-base to guide HIV prevention strategies for Black men. This dissertation sought to make a contribution to this emerging evidence-base.

One important factor influencing HIV risk, which moves upstream from those operating at the individual level, is socioeconomic position or standing (CDC, 2014; Denning & DiNenno, 2010). Socioeconomic standing (SS) generally encompasses one's occupation, education level, and individual and/or household income (Galobardes, Shaw, Lawlor, Lynch, & Smith, 2006). Socioeconomic standing both directly and indirectly influences HIV risk. For example, data from the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance System indicates that the rate of HIV infection is 20 times greater for heterosexual adults living in impoverished urban areas when compared to all heterosexual adults in the U.S. (Denning & DiNenno, 2010). This same data also finds that the relative risk of HIV infection is significantly greater for individuals with less than a high school education or less than $10,000 in annual household income, those living below the poverty threshold, and those who are unemployed and/or disabled (Denning & DiNenno, 2010). Additionally, other studies suggests that low-income Black men are at increased risk for HIV infections (Bowleg & Raj, 2012; Millett et al., 2012). In fact, poverty may explain a significant amount of the disparities in HIV infection rates observed between Blacks and other racial groups in the U.S. (Denning & DiNenno, 2010). Data demonstrates that poverty can place individuals at increased risk for HIV by limiting their access to prevention services (e.g., HIV testing). Poverty can constrain health behavior decision-making leading some to engage in activities that provide means to economic survival but increase HIV risk (e.g., exchanging sex for money and other goods) (CDC, 2013). The convergence of poverty and diminished socioeconomic capacity

creates a perfect storm for enhanced HIV risk among Black men who have historically and contemporarily had their access to economic success blocked because of structural racism and other forms of discrimination (Williams, 1999). Thus, addressing socioeconomic inequalities and the structural factors which create them is an important step towards reducing HIV disparities. Failing to do so may diminish the effectiveness of HIV prevention strategies like HIV testing and ARVs among Black men (Eaton et al., 2014).

In addition to socioeconomic inequalities, more attention is being paid to sociocultural factors operating in environments where Black men live and transact from day-to-day (Gupta, Parkhurst, Ogden, Aggleton, & Mahal, 2008). Sociocultural factors include environmental forces that influence the beliefs and behaviors of individuals existing within societies. These forces encompass factors such as norms around gender roles, gender socialization, racial identity, interpersonal power structures, and community attitudes and beliefs (Boundless, 2014). One such sociocultural factor impacting Black men's HIV risk is traditional masculinity norms-- which are the societal standards and expectations for how men should think, act, and behave, which can in turn shape men's own individual masculinity ideologies (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin, Fullilove, & Peacock, 2009; Levant & Richmond, 2008; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010). Masculinity ideologies are thought to be byproducts of gender socialization--the process of boys and men learning the social expectations and attitudes attributed to their biological male sex (Andersen & Taylor, 2007)—and reflect men's internalization and endorsement of socially constructed norms and beliefs about what constitutes ideal attributes, characteristics, and behaviors of men (Levant & Richmond, 2008). Individuals, cultural norms, and social structural factors provide instructions to men and boys that encourage and reward their performance of gendered attitudes and behaviors traditionally and stereotypically associated with the male sex

(Courtenay, 2000; Levant & Pollack, 1995). This social indoctrination also conditions men to avoid demonstrating emotion or vulnerability, which could be interpreted as weakness, and to value achievement. Purportedly, masculinity ideologies increase men's health risks by encouraging risk-taking and discouraging help-seeking behavior (Courtenay, 2000; Hammond, Matthews, Mohottige, Agyemang, & Corbie-Smith, 2010; Mahalik, Burns, & Syzdek, 2007; Williams, 2003). Heteronormativity is another highly idealized traditional masculinity ideology and asserts that 'real men' should have a heterosexual orientation (Phillips, 2006). Brannon & David (1976) sum up these traditional or hegemonic masculinity ideologies in four archetypes:

1. "No Sissy Stuff": Avoiding femininity and concealing emotions

2. "The Big Wheel": Endeavoring to be respected for successful achievement (a.k.a. the breadwinner)

3. "The Sturdy Oak": Exuding confidence, looking tough, and never showing weakness.

4. "Give 'Em Hell": Seeking risk and adventure and accepting violence if necessary.

These archetypes provide a useful organization of dominant themes underlying the major ways in which boys and men are socialized to display masculinities. However, men vary in the degree to which they endorse or internalize traditional masculinity ideologies. Definitions of, and social norms around masculinity also vary by race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, life stage, and historical era. In fact, the now common use of the term masculinities by researchers conveys that traditional masculinity norms and ideologies are not universal to all men, and captures the plurality of masculinity and the variations in the ways male roles are enacted by race, class, ethnic group, life stage, sexual orientation, and historical context (Levant, 1996; Rogers, Sperry, & Levant, 2015). Nevertheless, while masculinities can and do vary by sociodemographic group, they are still informed and influenced by hegemonic or traditional masculinity norms and

ideologies (Bowman, 1989; Levant, 1996). Therefore, it is important to examine hegemonic masculinity ideologies to better understand how they are impacted by masculinity norms and sociocultural factors (e.g., masculine socialization), and how masculinities influence Black men's health behaviors.

One such health behavior is maintaining multiple, overlapping sexual partnerships, also known as concurrency. Concurrency is defined as sexual relationships that overlap in time (Adimora, Schoenbach, & Doherty, 2006). Concurrency is thought to facilitate the rapid spread of HIV by reducing the time in between sexual partners that an individual has to discover his or her HIV infection and take precautions to prevent viral transmission to others (Adimora, Schoenbach, & Doherty, 2007). This reduced time between sexual partners coupled with a high density of HIV infection among Blacks creates ideal conditions for rapid transmission of HIV from person to person (Adimora et al., 2007; Adimora et al., 2004; Doherty, Shiboski, Ellen, Adimora, & Padian, 2006). Traditional masculinity ideologies sanction multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships as markers of manhood. Previous studies affirm that men who strongly endorse traditional masculinity ideologies are more likely to engage in concurrency than men who do not as strongly endorse these ideologies (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010).

Concurrency has been identified as a key contributor to racial and socioeconomic disparities in HIV. Previous studies demonstrate that it occurs more frequently among Black men when compared to other races of men (Adimora et al., 2007). Existing evidence also indicates that concurrency occurs more frequently among men of lower SS when compared to men of higher standing (Adimora et al., 2004; Maher, Waswa, Karabarinde, & Baisley, 2011). In light of this compelling data, concurrency among Black men who have sex with women was the primary

outcome of interest for this dissertation. The focus of the quantitative study in this dissertation was to examine how SS and masculinities jointly and separately influence Black men's engagement in concurrency and their subsequent HIV risk. The quantitative study also investigated associations between ideologies governing the demonstration of respectability (e.g., providing economically for one's family) and reputational (e.g., enhancing one's social status among male peers via demonstrations of sexual prowess) masculinities (Whitehead, 1997) and Black men's engagement in concurrency.

While prior studies help to contextualize concurrency among Black men, a more nuanced understanding of the cognitive processes underlying Black men's attitudes about and motivations to engage in concurrency is missing from the current literature. The qualitative study in this dissertation addressed this evidence gap. The fuller understanding of how Black men think about masculinities and describe how their masculinities affect concurrency gained from this dissertation is a critical next step towards enhancing HIV prevention strategies targeting this vulnerable population. Prevailing explanations for Black men's concurrency collectively demonstrate that factors such as sociodemographic characteristics, stress-coping responses, and masculinity ideologies are all important correlates of this health risk behavior (Adimora et al., 2006; Bingham, Harawa, & Williams, 2013; Dworkin et al., 2009). What is not as clear is how sociodemographic characteristics (i.e., sexual orientation, SS), masculinities, and stress-coping responses influence one another or work in tandem to facilitate or impede Black men's engagement in concurrency. This dissertation proposed a more comprehensive framework for use in the quantitative and qualitative analyses to aid in understanding how variations in sociodemographic characteristics differentially influence masculinity ideologies and in turn how these ideologies influence stress-coping behaviors, including engagement in concurrency.

Focusing on these factors may birth new research and increase the effectiveness of HIV prevention strategies (DiClemente, Salazar, Crosby, & Rosenthal, 2005; Scribner, Theall, Simonsen, & Robinson, 2010).

Chapter 2 of this dissertation provides a review of the literature on concurrency among Black men and the influence of masculinity ideologies and other factors on this HIV risk behavior. The chapter then describes key theoretical frameworks which guided this research and the proposed integrated conceptual framework. This integrated conceptual framework guided the quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Following this, Chapter 3 presents the quantitative aims, hypotheses, and methods, followed by the qualitative aim, points of inquiry, and methods. The subsequent chapters present the results and implications of the analyses discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

<u>Concurrency</u>

Extant studies describe several individual and social structural-level factors that increase Black men's likelihood of initiating and sustaining concurrent sexual partnerships. Individual-level factors include men's endorsement of more traditional or hegemonic masculinity ideologies and their beliefs that their partners have other sexual partners (Bowleg et al., 2011; Kogan, Cho, Barnum, & Brown, 2015; Senn, Scott-Sheldon, Seward, Wright, & Carey, 2011; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010). Factors at the social structural-level driving concurrency among Black men include imbalances in female-to-male ratios in communities and modeling of concurrency to boys and men by those in their familial and social networks (i.e., older male relatives maintaining multiple sexual partners and displaying sexually concurrency as a "natural" marker of manhood to younger male family members) (Adimora et al., 2007; Adimora et al., 2004; Levant, 1996; Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Concurrency has received significant attention in HIV prevention research among Black heterosexuals (Adimora et al., 2007; Carey, Senn, Seward, & Vanable, 2010; Doherty, Schoenbach, & Adimora, 2009; Jolly et al., 2016; Kenyon, Boulle, Badri, & Asselman, 2010; Senn et al., 2011), Black MSM (Bohl, Raymond, Arnold, & McFarland, 2009; Rosenberg, Khosropour, & Sullivan, 2012; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010), and Black MSMW (Crosby, Mena, Geter, & Hickson, 2016; Dyer, Regan, Pacek, Acheampong, & Khan, 2014; Gorbach, Murphy, Weiss, Hucks-Ortiz, & Shoptaw, 2009; Operario, Smith, Arnold, & Kegeles, 2011). It has also been cited as one behavior responsible for driving the disproportionate impact of HIV on Black men and the larger Black community (Adimora et al.,

2007; Adimora et al., 2004; Andrasik, Clad, Bove, Tsegaselassie, & Morris, 2015; Bohl et al., 2009). Given this information, it is important to identifyand intervene on the individual and social structural factors driving concurrency among Black men in order to slow the transmission of HIV throughout their sexual networks. Moreover, it is critical to understand why these factors are associated with concurrency among some, but not all, Black men.

Concurrency and the Social Embodiment of Hegemonic Masculinity Ideologies

The **social embodiment of hegemonic masculinity ideologies** is cited as a key driver of concurrency (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009; Kogan et al., 2015; Ragnarsson, Townsend, Ekström, Chopra, & Thorson, 2010; Reed et al., 2012; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010). Hegemonic masculinity ideologies are norms and beliefs that allow men to express and maintain social power, oftentimes over women or other men, such as non-heterosexual and/or feminine men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Among other things, hegemonic masculinity ideologies reinforce and maintain men's emotional restrictiveness and their desire for achievement and sexual conquest as a means of expressing and sustaining social power (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The social embodiment of hegemonic masculinity ideologies refers to the use of men's bodies to express and sustain social power (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As it relates to the social embodiment of hegemonic masculinity ideologies, these beliefs, familial modeling, and social norms around men's engagement in concurrency reflect men's use of their bodies to garner prestige (i.e., elevated social status among peers) bestowed upon men who use sexual encounters as opportunities for conquest and achievement. It also highlights the sociocultural factors (e.g., masculine socialization) which help some men to maintain power over women and other men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Social embodiment of hegemonic masculinity ideologies is associated with increased engagement in concurrency (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009; Ragnarsson et al., 2010; Reed et al., 2012; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010). In several previous studies with Black men in their samples, men report believing that having multiple concurrent sexual partners denotes manhood and supports some men's perceptions of their own levels of masculine strength (i.e., men's perceptions of how much of a man they are based upon their idealized level of masculinity) (Frye et al., 2012; Macauda, Erickson, Singer, & Santelices, 2011; Senn et al., 2011). Additionally, some men report that engaging in concurrency reflects familial modeling and social norms for what it means to be a man (Nunn et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2012).

Others studies examining concurrency associate this behavior with the imbalanced sex ratio of men to women in communities (Adimora et al., 2013; Senn et al., 2011). Some men cite this imbalance as a justification for maintaining multiple concurrent sexual partnerships (Senn et al., 2011). It is important to note that the social structural factors, such as laws and policies which facilitate the mass incarceration of Black men, are thought to contribute to the imbalanced sex ratios in Black communities and may serve to reinforce some Black men's internalization of the notion that true masculinity entails maintaining multiple, overlapping sexual partnerships. Again, a social embodiment framework helps us to understand how this belief might be reflective of hegemonic masculinity ideologies promoting sexual conquest and achievement as "natural" phenomena intended to help men to maintain dominance over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Senn et al., 2011). The concept of social inscription within social embodiment theory helps to further explain how the male body functions as, "a surface onto or into which social norms are written by others or by the self (Tolman, Bowman, & Fahs, 2014, p. 761)." Traditional masculinity norms and ideologies around sexual conquest and achievement

become entangled with men's bodies and then are acted out, often unconsciously, through their bodies (i.e., concurrency) as a means of endorsing these ideologies (Tolman et al., 2014).

In the absence of high respectability masculinity via high SS, men's heavier reliance on reputational masculinity to build masculine strength may be a reflection of their internalization and embodiment of traditional masculinity ideologies and scripts (Tolman et al., 2014). Respectability masculinity refers to men's display of masculine strength and procurement of respect from individuals in their community by providing financially for one's family, being law-abiding, and exhibiting high moral values (Whitehead, 1997). Reputational masculinity refers to men's display of masculine strength and procurement of elevated social status among peers by engaging in behaviors such as "out-drinking" peers when consuming alcohol, winning sports competitions and games, and through the sexual conquest of women (Whitehead, 1997). In essence, men want to feel like men (as prescribed by traditional masculinity norms) and may resort to engaging in behaviors, such as concurrency, which puts their health in peril, in order to achieve an acceptable level of masculine strength. The social embodiment of hegemonic or traditional masculinity and the risk behaviors that often accompany these roles are particularly salient issues for Black boys and men who have been economically oppressed because of their race. Denial of access to means or characteristics associated with respectability masculinity (e.g., high income and educational attainment) may increase Black men's likelihood of using their bodies to enact social scripts instructing them to take (sexual) risks as a means of building masculine strength (Dworkin et al., 2009)—resulting in higher rates of HIV risk behaviors and infections.

The framing of concurrency as the social embodiment of hegemonic masculinity is consistent with the masculine or gender role strain paradigm developed by Pleck (1981).

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Masculine role strain refers to the negative consequences arising from men's conflicting ideas about traditional masculinity and their attempts and failures to fulfill these masculine roles (Bowman, 1989; Levant, 1996; O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986; Pleck, 1981). Masculine role strain can manifest itself in a variety of ways based on individual characteristics and social conditions (e.g., race, SS, sexual orientation). O'Neil et al. (1995) assert that masculine role strain varies across demographics, personality types, behaviors, and relationships.

According to Pleck (1995), men may experience three types of masculine role strain 1) Discrepancy, 2) Dysfunction, and 3) Trauma. Men experience discrepancy strain when they do not conform to their internalized masculinity ideologies (e.g., heterosexual, high SS)—which often reflect traditional masculinity ideologies. Dysfunction strain occurs when men's conformity to (traditional) masculinity ideologies result in behaviors such as violence, hypersexuality, and drug use. These behaviors can have negative health and social consequences for the men themselves or others (e.g., romantic/sexual partners) who are subjected to the men's behaviors (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Trauma strain is a consequence of the masculine socialization of boys and men. From a young age, males are conditioned to restrict their emotionality and encouraged to be out-of-tune with their emotions. This emotional restrictiveness among boys and men can result in aggressive, hypersexual, and other risk-taking behaviors (Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Additionally, boys and men's emotional separation (due to socialization encouraging the denial of emotion) from their mothers at a young age can result in individualism and "defense autonomy" or their aversion to initiating and maintaining close emotional attachments due to the fear of losing those attachments (Thompson & Pleck, 1995).

Men may experience one or multiple forms of masculine role strain. These strains are also thought to occur at four overlapping levels: 1. **Cognitions** (restrictive gender views and stereotypical attitudes about gender); 2. **Affective Experiences** (emotional conflict about gender roles); 3. **Behaviors** (individuals' actions, reactions, and interactions with themselves and others based on their gender ideologies); and 4. **Unconscious Experiences** (repressed gender conflicts) (Levant, 1996; O'Neil et al., 1995). Bowman (1989, p. 129) asserts that "the manner in which role difficulties are perceived, interpreted, and evaluated may largely distinguish maladaptive from adaptive behavioral responses." Using the masculine role strain paradigm helped to produce a more critical, interpretative insights into the sexual behaviors of Black men and help to refine HIV prevention strategies targeting Black males. The qualitative portion of this dissertation focused specifically on unearthing cognitions and affective experiences underlying masculine role strain and subsequent engagement in concurrency. Cognizant of Bowman's assertion, this dissertation explored whether masculine role strain related to SS and sexual orientation manifests in Black men's cognitions and affective experiences (i.e., traditional masculinity ideologies or restrictive views on gender) and why they lead to concurrency, for some Black men.

Concurrency & Sociodemographic Characteristics

Previous quantitative and qualitative public health studies (Adimora et al., 2006; Macauda et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2014; Nunn et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2012; Senn et al., 2011) associate numerous **sociodemographic characteristics** or factors with engaging in concurrency. They include factors such as race, age, educational level, income, employment status, drug use, incarceration history, and sexual orientation. As previously mentioned, concurrency is found to occur more frequently among Black men when compared to other races of men (Adimora et al.,

2007). In addition to race, age and drug use history also appear to have an important influence on the behavior (Adimora et al., 2013; Adimora, et al., 2006; Adimora et al., 2003; Maher et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2012). Concurrency is found to occur more among younger men when compared to older ones (Adimora et al., 2003; Maher et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2012) and among men with a history of crack-cocaine use when compared to non-users (Adimora, et al., 2006; Adimora, et al., 2003). Additionally, men who use drugs before or during sex are more likely to engage in concurrency when compared to men who do not (Adimora et al., 2013; Maher et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2011). Men who are co-parents (i.e., share parenting responsibilities with a non-residential mother) are more likely to engage in concurrency when compared to all other men in the study who are not co-parents (Taylor et al., 2011). Additionally, several studies find that men with a recent incarceration history are more likely to engage in the behavior when compared to those without such a history (Adimora, et al., 2007; Adimora, et al., 2004; Adimora, et al., 2003).

Evidence documenting the influence of other sociodemographic characteristics on men's engagement in concurrency, however, is mixed. For example, one study among MSM in New York City finds that concurrency is more likely to occur among men with higher education levels (Van Tieu et al., 2014). While, another study with a sample of rural Southern heterosexual Black men with a recently reported HIV infection finds that concurrency is more likely to occur among those with less than a high school education when compared to those with the equivalent of a high school education or higher (Adimora et al., 2003). These disparate findings suggest that the influence of education on concurrency may vary across geographic regions or that education may work in tandem with other factors to increase risk for concurrency.

Additional studies examining the influence of sociodemographic characteristics on concurrency find it is more likely to occur among men with high income levels when compared to men with lower levels of income. (Lyons & Hosking, 2014; Westercamp, Mattson, & Bailey, 2013). However, other studies demonstrate the exact opposite association (Adimora et al., 2004; Maher et al., 2011). It is important to note that several of the studies (Lyons & Hosking, 2014; Westercamp et al., 2013) detecting associations between higher income levels and increased engagement in concurrency contain a sample of non-U.S. men. One study conducted among Black men in the U.S. asserts that concurrency occurs more frequently among men with lower income levels or those who are unemployed, when compared to their higher income and employed counterparts (Nunn et al., 2011). The correlation between sexual risk behaviors, such as engaging in concurrency, and diminished income and employment rates affirms that SS can exert an important influence on men's engagement in concurrency and is worthy of further investigation. Moreover, findings from other U.S.-based studies assert that some men use concurrency as an economic survival mechanism (Frye et al., 2012; Macauda et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2011). This dissertation builds on these assertions.

The influence of socioeconomic position or standing on HIV risk may be particularly important to investigate among Black men because of its relationship to notions of masculinity. Two central aspects of Black men's definitions of masculinity and manhood are family responsibility and economic provision (Hammond & Mattis, 2005). Black men's emphasis on economic provision for their families is consistent with Brannon's "Sturdy Oak" archetype and suggests that being a "waymaker" may be one means of displaying idealized masculine strength. Structural inequalities can limit Black men's ability to achieve traditionally defined masculine success (i.e., the sturdy oak) and the respectability accompanying this success (Hammond &

Mattis, 2005; Cazenave, 1984). This limitation may increase Black men's more rigid adherence to other traditional masculinity norms (i.e., Give 'Em Hell). In fact, theorists suggest that blocked provider role opportunities may fragment Black men's sense of masculinity and lead to "masculine imbalance"—men's inability to maintain balance in their respectability and reputational masculine strength (Whitehead, 1997). This imbalance reflects the perceived reduction in their ability to display masculine strength through respectability-based attributes. The imbalance can lead to an overreliance on reputational mechanisms to achieve this masculine strength when compared to men of other races (Aronson, Whitehead, and Baber, 2003; Whitehead, 1997; Whitehead, Peterson, & Kaljee, 1994). As a consequence, Black men may engage in more sexual risk behaviors because doing so helps them to build social status (i.e., reputational masculine strength) among their male peers and achieve an acceptable level of idealized manhood or masculine strength (Dworkin et al., 2009; Whitehead, 1997).

In addition to socioeconomic position, sexual orientation also exerts an important influence on concurrency behavior. Some studies find that concurrency occurs more frequently among non-heterosexual men when compared to heterosexual ones (Crosby et al., 2016; Dyer et al., 2014; Gorbach et al., 2009). Sexual orientation, which encompasses the emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions an individual has to men, women or both sexes (American Psychological Association, 2014), is a sociodemographic characteristic which can influence men's perception of themselves and their level of masculinity, as well as their perceptions of personal access to masculine strength via respectability mechanisms (Courtenay, 2000). Traditional and contemporary definitions of masculinity (i.e., Brannon & David's "No sissy stuff" archetype) perpetuate the prevailing prescription that Black men should not be gay or bisexual (Bowleg et al., 2011; Courtenay, 2000; Brannon & David, 1976; Levant, 1996; Phillips,

2006). Given these prescriptions, the term "traditional gender non-conforming (TGNC)" is used throughout this dissertation to refer to Black MSM and MSMW, or men who operate outside of these heteronormative, traditional definitions of masculinity, whether by attraction, identity, and/or behaviors. In contrast, the term traditional gender conforming (TGC) is used to refer to those Black men whose identity, attraction, and behavior align with heteronormative, traditional definitions of masculinity.

Black TGNC men often face multiple layers of oppression due to their race and sexual orientation (Choi, Paul, Ayala, Boylan, & Gregorich, 2013; Harper, 2007). The intersection of their identities as Black, TGNC, *and* men means that they often experience racism from White people--including the White Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals and communities, heterosexism from other Black people, and social stigma based upon their identities as Black men and/or Black TGNC men (Bowleg, 2013). These compounded experiences of stigma, discrimination, and marginalization can lead to negative health outcomes, such as low self-esteem and high stress levels, which in turn can lead to engaging in risky sexual behaviors (Stokes & Peterson, 1998). Studies show that experiences of racism, homophobia, and stigma increase Black TGNC men's likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviors (Boston Health Commission on LGBT Health, 2002; Crawford, Allison, Zamboni, & Soto 2002; Jeffries IV, Marks, Lauby, Murrill, & Millett, 2013; Parker et al., 2016).

These experiences of stigma, discrimination, and marginalization may also lead some Black TGNC men to conceal portions of their identity, leading to varying degrees of visibility and invisibility within their various communities (Crawford et al., 2002; Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004). Black TGNC men who are able to achieve a positive integrated identity of being both Black and TGNC tend to have higher self-esteem, stronger social support networks, greater

levels of life satisfaction, and lower levels of psychological distress than men who do not achieve this positive integrated identity (Crawford et al., 2002; Harper et al., 2004). Thus, perceived social invisibility and disintegrated identity each have important implications for Black men's health and social well-being given that

Experiencing layers of oppression also limits social power and access to resources (e.g., stable employment) necessary for Black TGNC men to obtain respectability masculinity. Blocked socioeconomic opportunities and diminished respectability masculinity may cause some Black TGNC men to seek out other means of validating their masculinity through reputational means, such as engaging in hypersexual behaviors (Courtenay, 2000). Black TGNC men may also experience masculine role strain due to their sexual orientation and inability to meet traditional standards of Black masculinity. This strain may generate additional chains of HIV risk for these men, including higher rates of drug use and sexual risk behaviors (Lynch, Brouard, & Visser, 2010). One study among men in the U.S. finds higher rates of concurrency among TGNC men when compared to their TGC counterparts (Dyer et al., 2014). Another study among a street-based sample in Los Angeles finds that MSMW engage in more concurrency than MSM and TGC men (Gorbach et al., 2009). In another study among Black and White MSMW, endorsing hypermasculinity ideologies, or men's overemphasized enactment of traditional masculinity ideologies, is associated with having more male and female sexual partners (LaPollo, Bond, & Lauby, 2013).

Black TGNC men, just like Black TGC men, are more likely to engage in concurrency than their non-Black counterparts (Taylor et al., 2011; Bohl et al., 2009; Doherty et al., 2009; Adimora et al., 2007). Both groups of men receive the same messages around traditional masculinity from a young age (Wilson et al., 2010). One predominate message given is that

being a Black man means having multiple sex partners, often overlapping in time (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Same-sex attraction may not become salient for young Black TGNC men until late adolescence (Dubé & Savin-Williams, 1999). Cultural factors may also delay the integration of their identity as both Black and TGNC (Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2004), therefore leading them to operate socially from a heteronormative perspective. Thus, Black TGNC boys may still internalize these societal messages about male-appropriate behavior (Pulerwitz, Michaelis, Verma, & Weiss, 2010).

These combined factors suggest that many of the factors driving concurrency will be the same for both Black TGNC and TGC men. Both groups of men have historically had their sense of respectability masculinity threatened by structural discrimination and social marginalization (Mays, Cochran, & Zamudio, 2004) and may seek out additional methods of achieving masculine strength, such as an overreliance on reputational masculinity attributes like hypersexuality. Moreover, hypermasculinity and hypersexuality among TGNC men may be a means for them to prove their manhood to others—despite their sexual orientation (Courtenay, 2011). In fact, these men can and do endorse traditional ideologies—often at higher levels than TGC men (Courtenay, 2011). Similar to TGC men, hypermasculinity among TGNC men may be best understood as an attempt to use their bodies to embody acceptance and endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Thus far, studies conducted to understand concurrency among TGNC men (Bohl et al., 2009; Dyer et al. 2014; Gorbach et al., 2009; Operario et al., 2011; Rosenberg et al., 2012; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010) have not fully examined connections between masculinity ideologies, sexual orientation, and concurrency among Black men. Taken together, studies reviewed in this section demonstrate the importance of considering the collective influence of masculinity and

sexual orientation on sexual behaviors among TGNC men. Working to understand the influence of masculinity ideologies and sexual orientation on Black men's engagement in concurrency is an important next step for generating new knowledge which may be useful in developing strategies to reduce their overall risk for HIV infection.

Concurrency & Stressors/Stress-Coping Factors

In addition to sociodemographic characteristics, stressors, and coping strategies employed to relieve them are associated with an increased likelihood of engaging in concurrency. Previous research has identified concurrency as a stress-coping behavior for men (Bingham et al., 2013; Bowleg et al., 2014; Bowleg et al., 2013; Latkin, Curry, Hua, & Davey, 2007). Relationship stressors appear to exact a unique toll on Black men's sexual behavior. For instance, several studies find that respondents are more likely to engage in concurrency if they believe that a sexual partner has other partners or an STI or when they have a partner who engages in concurrency (Adimora et al., 2006; Nunn et al., 2014; Nunn et al., 2011; Senn et al., 2011). Some men use concurrency as a retaliation tactic against their partners who have (or they believe have) engaged in concurrency. Some may see it as, "you cheat on me, and so I'm going to cheat on you." Therefore, these men view concurrency as the appropriate response to their partner's infidelity (as opposed to leaving the relationship or using some other methods for coping with the stress of feeling betrayed by a partner).

Black men are also found to engage in concurrency if they express a need for different partners to fulfill their romantic and sexual needs (Carey et al., 2010; Frye et al., 2012; Macauda et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2012; Senn et al., 2011). Previous research (Burn & Ward, 2005; Hoagland & Levant, 2015; Karakis & Levant, 2012) finds that men's greater conformity to and endorsement of traditional masculinity norms and ideologies is negatively

correlated with their relationship satisfaction. These findings reinforce the notion of exploring the influence of masculinity ideologies on relationship dissatisfaction and stress-coping behaviors, including engaging in concurrency. The qualitative section of this dissertation specifically explored relationship dissatisfaction.

Investigating concurrency as a stress-coping mechanism may provide valuable insight into the cognitive and affective processes accompanying its use among Black men. Incorporating a stress-coping framework may help to determine exactly how and why some men use concurrency behavior as a coping response to stressors such as relationship dissatisfaction, low SS, and masculine role strain. Thus, this dissertation examined the connection between men's masculinity ideologies, especially traditional masculinity ideologies and their relationship dissatisfaction, and how this stressor can in turn lead to engaging in concurrency. Taking this approach revealed insights about other, less health damaging coping behaviors and masculinity ideologies, which may be leveraged in future HIV prevention interventions.

Theoretical Frameworks

Previous research studies have explored concurrency using a number of theoretical frameworks to guide the investigation of factors associated with this behavior, identify mechanisms by which these factors impact concurrency, and design interventions to reduce concurrency and HIV risk. These theories include Graph Theory (Morris & Kretzschmar, 1997), Alcohol Myopia Theory (Senn, Carey, Vanable, Coury-Doniger, & Urban, 2009), Sexual Script Theory (Collins & Champion, 2011), Social Cognitive Theory (Carter et al., 2007; Wingood & DiClemente, 2000), and the Theory of Gender and Power (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000). An overview of these theories is provided below. This overview is not designed to be comprehensive but rather to illustrate the utility of existing theories and limitations of relying on a singular theoretical approach for understanding concurrency.

Morris & Kretzschmar (1997) used Graph Theory to simulate the spread of HIV through a sexual network via concurrency. Graph Theory refers to a mathematical model used to simulate and analyze phenomena within social networks (Harary & Norman, 1953; Morris & Kretzschmar, 1997). While this theory is helpful for understanding the technicalities of how HIV is spread from person-to-person, it does not provide any context for understanding the factors driving individuals' engagement in concurrency. Another theoretical approach that helps to understand factors driving concurrency is Alcohol Myopia Theory. Senn and colleagues used this theory as a framework to potentially explain why alcohol and drug use are associated with an increase in concurrency among respondents recruited from an STI clinic for a study on condom use and concurrency (Senn et al., 2009). They assert that an individual's consumption of alcohol (or drugs) diminishes their cognitive functioning. This diminished functioning purportedly leads individuals to narrowly focus on more immediate needs and desires (i.e., their need for sexual

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gratification via concurrency) at the expense of more long-term needs and desires (e.g., their desire for a long-term, committed relationship and/or to remain free of HIV-infection). (Senn et al., 2009; Steele & Josephs, 1990) While the use of Alcohol Myopia Theory can help to explain concurrency that occurs during or after the use of drugs and alcohol, it does not explain why concurrency occurs when drug and alcohol use is not present. It also does not address the many other factors, such as sociodemographics and masculinities, which are cited in the literature as drivers of concurrency.

Collins and Champion's work (2011) addresses some of these other factors in their exploration of young ethnic minority males' romantic beliefs. In this study, they use Sexual Script Theory to explain why young men may maintain multiple, concurrent sexual partnerships. Sexual Script Theory posits that the interaction of cultural norms, personal adaptation to norms in specific contexts, and internal consideration of circumstances will results in specific sexual behavior (Collins & Champion, 2011). There is strength in applying this theory to understanding concurrency because it takes into account the influence of social norms on men's cognitions and subsequent concurrency behavior. However, Collins and Champion do not take into account the economic or socio-historical realities of Black men and the influence of these factors on their perceptions of, or engagement in concurrency. Additionally, Collins and Champion's study, along with the other previously discussed studies, rely on a singular theoretical approach. Relying on a single theory limits the ability to fully capture the complex motivations underlying men's engagement in concurrency. Given that men engage in concurrency for various reasons, taking a singular theoretical approach to understanding their engagement in the behavior restricts researchers' abilities to adequately view the different perspectives which inform men's cognitions and decision-making around engaging in concurrency (Dobson, 1999).

Wingood & DiClemente (2000) use a multi-theoretical approach for addressing concurrency. The researchers use the Theory of Gender and Power (TGP) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to design an intervention aimed at reducing Black women's HIV risk. TGP concepts are used to increase women's awareness of the biological (e.g., vaginal douching) and social (e.g., gender power imbalances) factors which increase their risk for contracting HIV. Concepts from the SCT are used to construct intervention activities aimed at changing women's attitudes and skills related to HIV risk reduction behaviors (e.g., consistent condom use). (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000). While this multi-theoretical approach is useful for describing the role of gender power imbalances, it was primarily used to design an HIV risk-reduction intervention among women and does not seek to understand the factors that are driving concurrency behavior among socially marginalized men. Moreover, the sample in Wingood and DiClimente's study does not capture gender-specific information for Black men, such as how masculinity ideologies and stress-coping responses influence Black men's perceptions of power or their concurrency behavior.

All of the above mentioned studies use either quantitative or qualitative methodologies. Blacks and men comprise the majority of the samples in these studies, suggesting that the methodological approaches from these studies, including the use of theory and both quantitative and qualitative inquiries, are useful ones for better understanding and intervening upon concurrency among Black men. Additionally, these studies highlight the necessity of examining both individual (e.g., cognitions and traditional masculinity ideologies) and sociocultural factors (e.g., traditional masculinity norms) in order to better understand concurrency among Black men. The near absence of more comprehensive theoretical frameworks for examining concurrency among Black men presents an opportunity to develop one that makes a clearer connection

between masculinity ideologies, stress-coping responses, and concurrency behavior. A more comprehensive framework could enhance the understanding of the factors driving concurrency among Black men, the processes by which they influence behavior, and strategies for manipulating those factors in HIV risk reduction interventions. For these reasons, this dissertation proposed the integration of the Masculine Role Strain theory (previously described), Big Man Little Man Complex (BMLMC) Framework, the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC), and SCT to create such a comprehensive framework.

Big Man Little Man Complex

Researcher Tony Whitehead has conducted work to determine which aspects of masculinity ideologies are more likely to lead to increased sexual risk behaviors among Black men (Whitehead, 1997; Whitehead et al., 1994). His research findings have given rise to the BMLMC framework. BMLCMC arises from Whitehead's ethnographic work on masculinity and male gender identity among Black men in Jamaica and in urban areas in the Eastern U.S. BMLMC is an extension and specific application of the Masculine Role Strain Theory. BMLMC demonstrates how Blacks men's disadvantaged economic, political, and sociocultural experiences can influence their level (or sense) of masculine strength and lead to poor health outcomes (Whitehead et al., 1994).

BMLMC posits that respectability and reputation are two critical attributes of Black men's masculine strength. Respectability is earned when men are able to display masculine strength by procuring a high SS (e.g., stable employment, excelling academically, gaining home ownership, and achieving financial stability). Because having a high socioeconomic position is frequently equated with male sexual attractiveness and men's definition of manhood, obtaining these symbols of respectable masculinity confers "big man" status (Whitehead, 1997). This

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masculine attribute, as prescribed by traditional masculinity norms, can impact how men view their level of masculine strength. In contrast to big men, "little men" are those possessing lower levels of respectability masculinity (i.e., low socioeconomic positioning). These men are described as having diminished economic capacity, which leads to a fragmented gendered or masculine self. They experience discrepancy masculine role strain as they are unable live up to the masculinity ideologies they have been socialized to endorse. In the absence of respectability masculinity, "little men" seek to increase their levels of masculine strength by engaging in behaviors to increase their reputational masculinity, such as "out-drinking" peers when consuming alcohol, winning sports competitions and games, and through the sexual conquest of women (Whitehead, 1997; Whitehead et al., 1994; Whitehead, 1984). Demonstrations of reputational masculinity are thought to enhance a man's social status among his male peers (Whitehead, 1997).

Whitehead (1997) first used his BMLMC framework to examine the influence of reputational and respectability masculinity on Black male sexual behaviors during an exploratory, ethnographic study of over 600 men and women in Washington D.C. and across Maryland. Whitehead conducted group ethnographic interviews on a variety of HIV-related topics. His 1997 publication uses data from over 350 boys and men ages 10-49 to explore Black men's family life and social marginalization, and the influence of economics and gender identity on their HIV risk. A key aim of this study was to demonstrate how masculine role strain due to diminished respectability masculinity translates into Black men's desire to recoup masculine strength through an overreliance on reputational masculinity and participation in risky sexual behaviors, which ultimately increases their HIV infection risk.

Whitehead concludes that understanding the influence of socioeconomic factors on Black male masculine role identities or masculinities may be the key to reducing Black men's HIV risk. This conclusion, which is the foundation of BMLMC, is supported by other research which links low socioeconomic position (e.g., poverty) to increased HIV risk for Black men (CDC, 2014; DiNenno, Oster, Sionean, Denning, & Lansky, 2012; Krieger, Chen, Waterman, Rehkopf, & Subramanian, 2005). Whitehead further asserts that structural factors (i.e., racial discrimination) block Black men from obtaining high SS and big man status (Whitehead, 1997). The assertions offered up by BMLMC are based upon anecdotal evidence from Whitehead's ethnographic studies of Black men in Jamaica and the US. Hence, while the linkage between diminished SS and increased HIV risk that is posited in Whitehead's BMLMC is supported by other research, the BMLMC is largely a theoretical framework that has scarcely been subjected to empirical testing.

Other studies have sought to extend BMLMC, but those studies focus on using this framework to interpret changes in attitudes about fatherhood (Aronson et al., 2003); guide discussions about ideal and stereotypical manhood (Baber, 2005); design an HIV prevention intervention for Black male college students (Aronson et al., 2013); and to examine the influence of incarceration on sexual risk behaviors (Knittel, 2011). None of these studies empirically linked Black men's diminished SS to increased sexual risk behaviors. Given that these existing studies which use the BMLMC do not empirically link diminished SS or low respectability masculinity to increased HIV risk, a more empirical exploration of BMLMC is warranted. Doing so will further clarify the relationship between Black men's diminished SS, experiences of masculine role strain, and HIV risk. This dissertation used BMLMC as a guiding theoretical

framework and empirically tested and explored its assumptions in quantitative and qualitative

investigations of factors associated with Black men's engagement in concurrency.

BMLMC can be further extended to account for some of the additional factors driving

concurrency among Black men. However, Whitehead (1997; 1994) did not directly address

concurrency during his conceptualization and application of BMLMC. Moreover, BMLMC only

addresses respectability and reputational masculinity and their influence on sexual risk behavior.

The framework does not account for other stress-related factors (i.e., relationship dissatisfaction)

that can influence Black men's concurrency behavior. The addition of other theoretical

frameworks can aid in framing how diminished socioeconomic positioning, masculine role

strain, and other factors impact concurrency—subsequently achieving a more comprehensive

understanding of this risk behavior among Black men. Additional theoretical frameworks can

also better explain the mechanisms by which masculine imbalance (i.e., low respectability

masculinity) leads to risky sexual behaviors like concurrency.

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC) is one such framework that can

enhance the utility of BMLMC and understanding of how masculine imbalance can lead to

concurrency by framing this imbalance as a stressor on Black men. Stressors are defined as

internal or external demands on an individual which may disrupt their life balance and result in

negative physical and psychological health outcomes (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977). A stressor can

be physiological and/or psychological in nature and internal or external to the individual

(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stressors arise from person-environment interactions, such as those

arising from men confronting a mismatch between their idealized masculinity norms and what

they are able to achieve/accomplish (Bowman, 1989; Hammond, Fleming, & Villa-Torres, 2016; Pleck, 1981)

The TMSC posits that negative stress-related outcomes, such as masculine role strain, are partly determined by two cognitive appraisal phases during which individuals assess the significance, meaning, and impact of the stressor (e.g., low respectability masculinity). Individuals also assess the resources available to them which they can use to cope with stressors. The primary and secondary appraisal stages encapsulate the influence of individual and situational factors on a person's active handling of stressors-- resulting in a variety of stress-coping behaviors (Berjot & Gillet, 2011). The primary appraisal phase entails an individual evaluating the potential threat of a stressor. During the primary appraisal phase, individuals determine if the potential stressor is relevant, benign, or stressful. For example, the low respectability masculinity and experiences of masculine role strain discussed in BMLMC would be a potential stressor evaluated by men during the primary appraisal phase. If low respectability masculinity is indeed a stressor to men, as posited by Whitehead's framework, the men would engage in a second phase of appraisal to determine the appropriate course of action for coping with the stressor.

During the secondary appraisal phase, individuals evaluate their ability to control and cope with the stressor using the resources at their disposal. Stress occurs when there is a perceived discrepancy between the demands stressors and an individual's perceived resources and ability to cope and meet the demands imposed by these stressors (Byers & Smyth, 1997; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Within the BMLMC framework, this could involve coping with the stress of low respectability masculinity by obtaining masculine strength through other

respectability mechanisms that are unrelated to having a high SS. For example, it could mean providing emotional and caregiving support to children.

Coping with low respectability masculinity could also entail an overreliance on reputational masculinity, as posited by the BMLMC, as a means of achieving an ideal level of masculine strength. Coping is thought to occur as a result of an individual "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person." (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.141) For example, one manner in which men may cognitively cope with masculine role strain is by redefining (i.e., changing) their own masculinity ideologies outside the realm of the restrictive traditional norms and beliefs about what constitutes ideal manhood. Hammond and Mattis' (2005) seminal work on Black manhood illustrates this point. Cognitive coping could also entail adhering less strictly to these traditional ideals. One manner in which men may behaviorally cope with masculine role strain is by engaging in concurrency or using other mechanisms for achieving reputational masculine strength, as put forth by the BMLMC.

The primary benefit of the TMSC is that it allows for more accurate predictions of individuals' stress-coping responses to a variety of stressors (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Some studies demonstrate its usefulness for addressing a variety of health issues including, how coping styles influence women's breast cancer screening behaviors (Barron, Houfek, & Foxall, 1997), food is used as a stress-coping response which can lead to eating disorders (Ozier, et al., 2007), and violence exposure produces post-traumatic stress disorder in children (Sloan-Power, Boxer, McGuirl, & Church, 2013). One key feature of the TMSC is its special focus on the factors which cause individual differences in responses to stressors and its view of stress as a controllable factor (Byers & Smyth, 1997; Lazarus &

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Folkman, 1984). This view can help to better understand why some men who have low respectability masculinity engage in concurrency, whether consciously or unconsciously, as a means to cope with the stress, while other men choose alternative methods for achieving an ideal level of masculine strength.

The TMSC has only been used on a limited basis to address issues around HIV-infection. Two previous studies used the framework to inform interventions addressing antiretroviral medication adherence for Black drug users living with HIV (Atkinson, Nilsson-Schönnesson, Williams, & Timpson, 2008; Harzke, et al., 2004). While previous studies (Folkman, Chesney, Pollack, & Phillips, 1992; Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008; Han et al., 2015) have examined the relationship between stress (e.g., racism) and increased sexual risk behaviors (e.g., unprotected anal intercourse), no studies, to my knowledge, explicitly apply TMSC framework to research addressing concurrency. Despite no previous use of TMSC to explicitly examine concurrency, TMSC is a useful addition to BMLMC to better understand how low SS and masculinity ideologies, framed by respectability and reputational mechanism, can cause masculine role strain and lead some men to engage in concurrency. Additionally, TMSC, can better help to understand the impact men's level of satisfaction with their romantic/sexual relationships has on their concurrency behavior.

Social Cognitive Theory

While TMSC enhances the utility of BMLMC for understanding the influence of respectability and reputational masculinity and masculine role strain on concurrency behavior, it does not fully explain how men may come to see concurrency as a useful (and perhaps appropriate) coping strategy for masculine role strain and/or relationship dissatisfaction. To fill this gap, I propose the addition of the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to the comprehensive

theoretical framework being developed in this dissertation. SCT is a learning theory that

examines the psychosocial dynamics which influence behavior and methodologies for promoting

behavior change. SCT explains behavior through a reciprocal, dynamic model consisting of

behavior, personal factors (including cognitions), and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986;

Glanz et al., 2008). It demonstrates that individuals can learn through observation without the

necessity of reward. SCT asserts that individuals do not exist in isolation and that they learn by

observing others (Glanz et al., 2008), like the men in their families and communities. It assumes

that the environment (i.e., the sociocultural factor: traditional masculinity norms) plays a critical

role in determining the behavior of individuals. SCT also assumes that individuals are not

passive learners, that they will anticipate the outcomes (i.e., increased masculine strength) of

certain behaviors (i.e., engaging in concurrency), and that they have the ability to regulate their

behavior. This theory pays special attention to the concept of self-efficacy, which reflects an

individual's belief in his/her ability to perform a particular task. The theory also acknowledges

the influence that the interdependence of individual and sociocultural factors has on self-efficacy

and subsequent health behaviors (Glanz et al., 2008). SCT also allows for the development of

more strengths-based (or less deficit-focused) interventions because it focuses attention on

individual agency to engage in positive health behaviors.

SCT has previously been utilized to examine a variety of health conditions including

multiple sclerosis, smoking, breast cancer, alcohol consumption, and HIV (Burke & Stephens,

1999; Graves, Carter, Anderson, & Winett, 2003; O'Leary, 2001; Suh, Motl, Olsen, & Joshi,

2014; Van Zundert, Nijhof, & Engels, 2009). In studies addressing sexual health, it has been

frequently been used to influence sexual behavior change, especially behavior change related to

increasing self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations for use condoms (Boutin-Foster et al.,

2010; Czuchry, Timpson, Williams, Bowen, & Ratliff, 2009; Dilorio et al., 2006; Dilorio, Dudley, Soet, Watkins, & Maibach, 2000; Jemmott, 2008; Kalichman, 2005; Kennedy et al., 2007a; Kennedy, Nolen, Applewhite, & Waiter, 2007b; Kennedy, Nolen, Applewhite, Waiter, & Vanderhoff, 2007c; Lopez, Tolley, Grimes, & Chen-Mok, 2009; Mausbach, Semple, Strathdee, Zians, & Patterson, 2007; Reback, Ling, Shoptaw, & Rohde, 2010; Semple, Patterson, & Grant, 2004; Strathdee et al., 2009). These applications of SCT to address condom use demonstrate its potential usefulness for helping to understand and intervene upon sexual risk behaviors, such as concurrency, by increasing individuals' knowledge of the risks of engaging in certain sexual behaviors, their self-efficacy for engaging in risk reduction behaviors, and their positive outcome expectations of engaging in said risk reduction behaviors. In fact, constructs from SCT have been used on a limited basis to examine issues surrounding concurrency (Campbell et al., 2009; Carter et al., 2007; Wingood et al., 2013). However, these examinations have been limited to exclusively female (Campbell et al., 2009; Wingood et al., 2013) and non-US populations (Carter et al., 2007)—highlighting the need for more research using the SCT to address HIV risk, concurrency, and behavior change among US Black men.

While SCT has been utilized to understand information about HIV risk and behavior change, the cognitions that make engaging in concurrency more or less likely are not as fully understood. Additionally, the effects of social influences and individual differences on those cognitions have not been adequately explained in the literature. Given this gap in understanding, this dissertation project again proposes the integration of SCT, TMSC, and BMLMC, along with Masculine Role Strain theory (Figure 1) to create a more comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding concurrency among Black men and the contexts in which it occurs.

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These frameworks are proposed for a variety of reasons. Previous studies demonstrate the utility of SCT and TMSC frameworks for examining concurrency (Carter et al., 2007; Kerrigan, et al., 2007; Wingood & DiClemente, 2000). Both frameworks provide guidance for examining and understanding the individual and environmental factors influencing behavior and health outcomes. TMSC provides a potential explanation for how phenomena such as low respectability masculinity, stigma, and marginalization can lead to negative health behaviors and outcomes. TMSC will be useful when seeking to identify and compare the factors driving concurrency among Black heterosexual and TGNC men. The SCT pays special attention to cognitions which influence individuals' attitudes about and engagement in a particular behavior.

Figure 1: Theoretical Conceptual Model
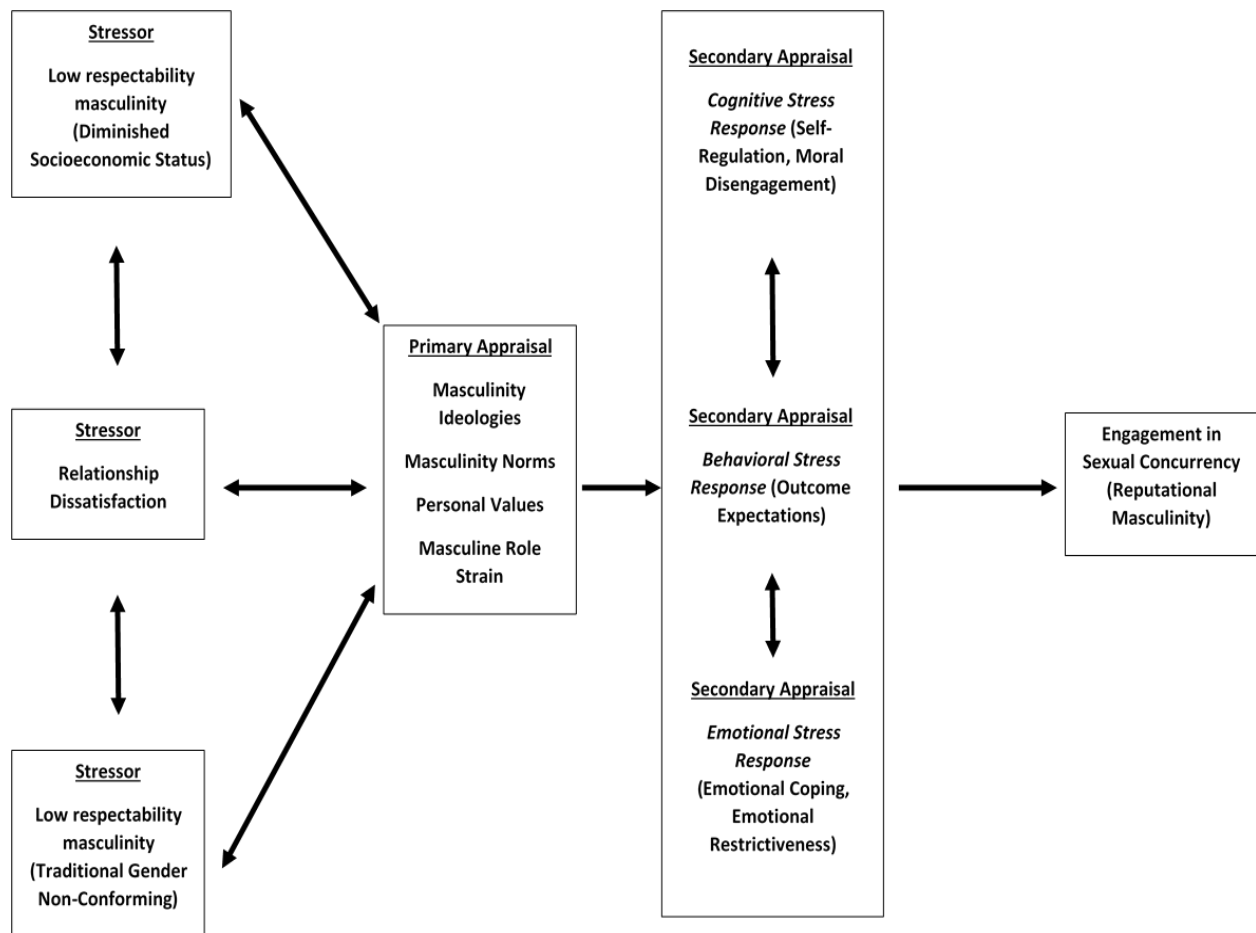
The framework provided by this theory will be useful for exploring the kinds of cognitions influencing Black men's engagement in concurrency. Cognitions are recognized as one place that masculine role strain manifests itself (O'Neil et al., 1995). Social norms which prescribe men's emotional restrictiveness (e.g., men don't express their emotions) and stereotypical attitudes about gender (e.g., it's in a man's nature to have multiple, concurrent sexual partners) may get internalized and manifest as cognitions influencing Black men's values (i.e., romantic desires, beliefs about the morality of engaging in concurrency) and subsequent engagement in concurrency. Additionally, TMSC provides a framework for understanding how value discrepancies or conflicts are evaluated by Black men (using the appraisal mechanisms suggested by the theory). It also helps to contextualize how, as theorized in the BMLMC, diminished socioeconomic position and the resulting masculine role strain, as well as relationship dissatisfaction serve as stressors which can lead to hypersexual behavior (i.e., concurrency) as a stress-coping response.

Conceptual Model Description

For the above mentioned reasons, this dissertation project integrated the frameworks from TMSC, SCT, BMLMC, and Masculine Role Strain theory to develop a more comprehensive guiding framework for examining the sociocultural drivers of concurrency among Black men. Beyond this dissertation, this framework could help to enhance the understanding of the factors driving concurrency among Black men, the processes by which they influence behavior, and how to manipulate those factors through interventions in order to reduce Black men's HIV risk. Table 1 provides an overview of the conceptual model components, which of the theories used in this dissertation inform that component, and which portion (quantitative and/or qualitative) of the dissertation explored the components.

Table 1: Conceptual Model Components

Conceptual Model Component	Component Description	Theory Informing Conceptual Model Component	Dissertation Study Exploring Conceptual Model Component
Potential Stressor	Masculine role strain due to men's low respectability masculinity (their low socioeconomic capacity and/or traditional gender non-conforming sexual orientation). Also encompasses men's dissatisfaction with their romantic/sexual relationships.	BMLMC, TMSC, Masculine Role Strain	Quantitative & Qualitative Studies
Primary Appraisal	Assessment of the meaning and significance of the potential stressors of relationship dissatisfaction and/or masculine role strain due to low respectability masculinity to determine if they are relevant, benign, or stressful	TMSC, Masculine Role Strain	Qualitative Study
Masculinity Ideologies	Individual beliefs, influenced by social norms, about what it means to be a man and how masculinity should be demonstrated	BMLMC, Masculine Role Strain	Quantitative & Qualitative Studies
Masculinity Norms	Societal beliefs that men are socialized to endorse regarding coping with stressors	SCT, Masculine Role Strain	Qualitative Study
Personal Values	Romantic desires, desire to provide economically, and beliefs about morality of concurrency	SCT	Qualitative Study
Masculine role strains/Conflicts	Conflicting ideologies about masculinity and the attempts and failures to meet prevailing cultural standards of manhood	BMLMC, Masculine Role Strain	Quantitative & Qualitative Studies
Secondary Appraisal	Assessment of personal and environmental resources to cope with stressor	TMSC	Qualitative Study

Cognitive Stress Response	Mental processes used to assess ability to cope with stressor	TMSC	Qualitative Study
Self-Regulation	Ability to control desire to seek masculine strength and/or relationship satisfaction elsewhere	SCT	Qualitative Study
Moral Disengagement	Persuasive reasons used to justify engagement in concurrency	SCT	Qualitative Study
Behavioral Stress Response	Behaviors engaged in as stress-coping responses to diminished socioeconomic standing or relationship dissatisfaction	TMSC	Quantitative & Qualitative Studies
Outcome Expectations	Assessment of whether concurrency will alleviate stress or cause more stress	SCT	Qualitative Study
Emotional Stress Response	Assessment of the emotional impact of stressors and concurrency	SCT, TMSC	Qualitative Study
Emotional Coping	Assessment of ability to effectively manage emotions, thoughts, and feelings about stressors and concurrency	SCT	Qualitative Study
Emotional Restrictiveness	Ability to communicate romantic and sexual desires to partners and/or the fear of rejection or being viewed as unmanly/non-masculine for having said desires.	BMLMC	Qualitative Study
Engagement in Concurrency	Odds of engaging in concurrency as a stress-coping response	BMLMC, SCT, TMSC, Masculine Role Strain	Quantitative & Qualitative Studies

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Research Questions

In an attempt to enhance the understanding of factors influencing Black men's engagement in concurrency and subsequently their HIV risk, this dissertation explored the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that increase Black men's odds of engaging in concurrency?

2. What influence does respectability and reputational masculinity and stress-coping processes have on Black men's engagement in concurrency?

3. What is the collective influence of traditional masculinities and sexual orientation on Black men's engagement in concurrency?

4. What are Black men's opinions of concurrency as a viable coping response to socioeconomic and relationship stress?

Quantitative Aims and Hypotheses

This dissertation used secondary data from quantitative and qualitative studies to further enumerate the factors driving concurrency among Black men. It sought to offer suggestions about how this evidence may be leveraged to enhance HIV prevention strategies for Black men. To achieve this goal, this study explored the following research aims:

Aim 1: Utilize quantitative data from the 2006-2010 wave of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) to explore the direct and moderated associations between

respectability masculinity (SS and sexual orientation) and Black men's engagement in concurrency.

> **Hypotheses 1-1:** Lower levels of respectability masculinity (conceptualized as low SS and TGNC sexual orientation) will be associated with greater odds of engaging in concurrency (reputational masculinity enactment).

> **Hypothesis 1-2**: The association between lower respectability masculinity (TGNC sexual orientation) and concurrency will be moderated by lower respectability masculinity (SS) such that the association between TGNC sexual orientation and greater odds of engaging in concurrency will be enhanced at lower levels of SS when compared to higher levels of SS.

It was believed that if these hypotheses were confirmed, they would provide support for Tony Whitehead's BMLMC framework which asserts that respectability and reputation are two important components of Black men's masculine strength and that in the absence of resources and characteristics (i.e., high SES, TGC orientation) to build masculine strength through respectability, men may experience masculine role strain and resort to hypersexuality (i.e., concurrency) to build reputation as a means of achieving masculine strength.

> **Aim 2:** Utilize quantitative data from the 2006-2010 wave of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) to explore the direct and moderated associations between traditional masculinity ideologies and Black men's engagement in concurrency.

Hypothesis 2-1: Higher endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies will be

associated with a greater odds of engaging in concurrency when compared to

lower endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies.

Hypothesis 2-2: Traditional masculinity ideologies will moderate the relationship

between respectability masculinity and concurrency such that the association

between lower respectability masculinity and greater odds of engaging in

concurrency will be stronger for men with higher endorsement of traditional

masculinity ideologies when compared to men with lower endorsement of

traditional masculinity ideologies.

It was believed that if these hypotheses were confirmed, they would provide confirmation

and support of findings from previous studies (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009;

Ragnarsson et al., 2010; Reed et al., 2012; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010) which associate the

endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies with engaging in concurrency.

Quantitative Methods

The analytic model (Figure 2) below presents the relationships that were tested in the

quantitative analyses.

Figure 2: Quantitative Analytic Model
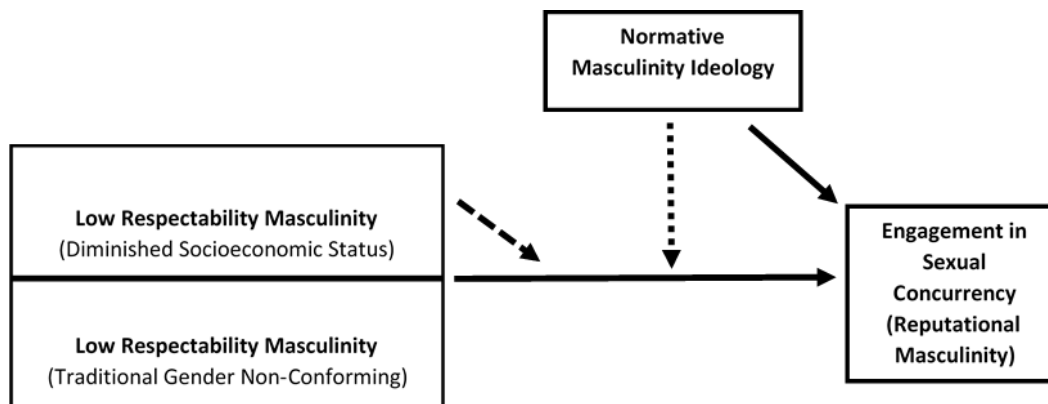
Study Design

The National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) is a nationally representative survey of men and women ages 15-44 years old (Groves, Mosher, Lepkowski, & Kirgis, 2009). The survey is designed to capture information about factors influencing men's and women's health, pregnancy, birth rates, and parenting behaviors. Each year, 5,000 men and women are selected for interviews using a probability sampling strategy. Participants are recruited for the study using a multi-stage sampling design. A national sample of 110 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) are chosen at the onset of data collection. These PSUs consist of metropolitan areas, single counties, or groups of neighboring counties. The national sample of 110 PSUs is divided into quarters, with each quarter consisting of eight large metropolitan areas and 25 smaller metropolitan areas/non-metropolitan areas. Data collection from smaller metropolitan/non-metropolitan areas rotates or changes with each data collection year. Segments, which are secondary units of the PSUs, are used to further divide the population for sampling purposes. These secondary segments are roughly comprised of neighborhoods or adjacent street blocks. From the secondary segments, housing units are then selected to choose participants to complete the survey. Screener interviews are conducted within selected housing units to elicit the names of each resident. If only one person between the ages of 15-44 years was living at the unit, then the interview is conducted with that person. If a housing unit has more than one eligible person between the ages of 15-44 living there, one person from that unit is selected at random to complete an interview (Groves et al., 2009).

The 2006-2010 NSFG utilizes a continuous cross-sectional study design. Each respondent is assigned a sampling weight which accounts for several factors. The first is the probability of selection based upon the over- and under-sampling of certain sub-groups (e.g.,

Black men and women). The next factor accounts for nonresponse. The third factor accounts for the sample totals provided by the US Census Bureau for age, sex, race, and Hispanic ethnicity (i.e., post-stratification). Additionally, weighting is done to adjust for sample variance estimates (i.e., trimming). All of these weights are included in the NSFG dataset. Robert Groves and colleagues provide a more detailed description of the NSFG study design in their article on the planning and development of the NSFG (Groves et al., 2009).

Study Participants

Between 2006 and 2010, a total of 22,682 individuals completed interviews for this wave of the NSFG. Blacks, Hispanics, and individuals between the ages of 15-24 were oversampled (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011). A male response rate of 75% produced a total of 10,403 male participants. Of that number, 2008 (19.3%) men identified as Black. The majority of the Black men are TGC, have the equivalent of a high school education or less, and have never been married. Table 2 provides details on the sample's sociodemographics.

<center>Study Measures</center>

Primary Outcome

<u>Concurrency.</u>   Several methods for defining and assessing concurrency have been proposed (McGrath, 2010). Limiting the assessment of concurrency behavior to the prior 6 months and defining it as "overlapping sexual partnerships in which sexual intercourse with one partner occurs between two acts of intercourse with another partner" has been proposed by a group of researchers working with UNAIDS as the standard method for measuring the behavior (McGrath, 2010, p. 621). For the purposes of this dissertation, concurrency among Black men with female sex partners was the outcome of focus. The concurrency variable was constructed using the dates of first and last sexual intercourse with the men's last two female sexual partners

<center>44</center>

(or three depending on the data availability). Dates during the preceding 12 months were

sequentially ordered and compared across all female sexual partnerships. A classification of

engagement in concurrency was made if the date of first sex with one sexual partner occurred

before the date of last sex with another partner. A determination of engagement in concurrency

was also made if a respondent reported having at least one male sexual partner during the past 12

months *and* having had a heterosexual partnership that lasted the entire span of that 12month

period. This method of determining concurrency is consistent with previous studies that use the

NSFG to examine associations of concurrency among U.S. men and Blacks (Adimora et al.,

2007; Adimora et al., 2004; Adimora et al., 2003; Doherty et al., 2009; Nield, Magnusson,

Chapman, & Lapane, 2014; Taylor et al., 2011).

Predictors

Respectability Masculinity.   One premise of the BMLMC framework is that having high SS is

frequently equated with male sexual attractiveness and men's definition of manhood. Obtaining

these symbols of respectable masculinity permits men to demonstrate masculine strength. In

other words, "big men" have high levels of respectability masculinity (i.e., ability to demonstrate

masculine strength through the possession of socioeconomically-related respectable masculine

characteristics, such as a high level of annual income). Using this premise as a guide for

statistical inquiry, a composite variable was created to reflect men's level of respectability

masculinity. The variable, which was an index of respectability masculinity, was constructed

using methods described in previous social science research (Ackerman & Cianciolo, 2000;

Subramanyam et al., 2013). To create the respectability masculinity variable, the raw scores for

income, education level, and employment were converted into z-scores. The z-scores were then

summed to create a composite z-score which reflected the men's level of respectability

masculinity. These variables were chosen for inclusion based upon the aims of this dissertation

to create a variable reflecting men's respectability masculinity.

Table 2: Demographics of NSFG Black Male Study Participants

Variable	Count Total N = 2008 (%)
Sexual Orientation	
Traditional gender conforming	1895 (94.4%)
Traditional gender non-conforming	88 (4.4%)
Not Ascertained	11 (0.6%)
Missing	14 (0.7%)
Age (mean)	27.8 years
Education	
Less than HS	739 (36.8%)
HS Graduate/GED	600 (29.9%)
Some College	390 (19.4%)
Associates Degree	83 (4.1%)
Bachelor's Degree	157 (7.8%)
Graduate/Professional Degree	39 (1.9%)
Marital/Cohabitating Status	
Married	381 (19.0%)
Not married but live with partner	205 (10.2%)
Widowed	4 (0.2%)
Divorced	78 (3.9%)
Separated, you and your spouse not getting along	53 (2.6%)
Never been married	1286 (64.04%)
Don't Know	1 (0.05%)

These choices were made based on theory from Whitehead's (1997) BMLMC framework

which asserts that men's SS influences their perceptions of their levels of masculine strength.

Income.   Income was assessed using the following measure from the 2006-2010 wave of

the NSFG which assesses the respondents' weekly, monthly, or yearly income before

taxes:

> "Which category represents your total (weekly / monthly / yearly) earnings before
>
> (taxes / taxes on your last job)?"

The response categories for the measure ranges from under $96 to $1,442 or more for

weekly income, under $417 to $6,250 or more for monthly, and under $5,000 to $75,000

or more for yearly income. These responses were all converted into yearly income (i.e.

multiplying weekly income figures by 52 and monthly income figures by 12).

Education Level.   Education level was assessed using the following measure: "What is

the highest grade or year of regular school you have ever attended?" There are 20

potential response options ranging "No Formal Schooling" on the lowest level to "7 or

more years of college and/or grad school" at the highest level. This measure was recoded

(HIEDUC) to reflect the respondents' highest completed year of school or highest degree

received.

Employment Stability.   This variable was measured using the question, "Now I'd like to

ask about your work experience in the last 12 months. By work, I mean any job for pay

that was regularly scheduled, that you were expected to perform. Please include full-time,

part-time, and temporary or summer jobs. In the last 12 months, that is since

[CMLSTYR_FILL], for how many months did you have any job for pay?" Response

options for this question are on a 1-month interval and range from 0 to 12 months.

Home Ownership.   Home ownership was measured using this question: "This next question is about your residence. Are your current living quarters owned or being bought by you or someone in your household, rented for cash, or occupied without payment of cash rent?" The response options are: "Owned or being bought by you or someone in your household," "Rented," or "Occupied without payment of cash rent."

Sexual Orientation. Sexual orientation reflected the second measure of respectability masculinity used as a predictor variable. Several measures were used to classify the sexual orientation of respondents. The 2006-2010 NSFG contains the following computed variables regarding sexual orientation, "Ever had oral or anal sex with a male," "Ever had vaginal, oral, or anal sex with a female," and "Ever had male-genital-involving sex with a female." Two other measures in the dataset are also designed to assess sexual orientation: (1) "People are different in their sexual attraction to other people. Which best describes your feelings? Are you... (Only attracted to females, Mostly attracted to females, Equally attracted to females and males, Mostly attracted to males, Only attracted to males, Not sure)"; and (2) "Do you think of yourself as ... (Heterosexual or straight, Homosexual or gay, Bisexual, Or Something else (Y1&Y2; Y3 deleted as response option))." Respondents' sexual orientation was recorded as TGC if their computed variable indicated yes to "Ever had vaginal, oral, or anal sex with a female," and/or "Ever had male-genital-involving sex with a female," if they described their feelings as "only attracted to females," AND if they reported thinking of themselves as "Heterosexual or straight." All other respondents had their sexual orientation classified as TGNC with the exception of those who report their feelings as "unsure," thinking of themselves as "something else", AND don't report ever having sex with a female or male. These respondents were excluded from the analyses.

<u>Level of Traditional Masculinity Ideology</u>. Methods described by DeVellis (2012) were used to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of measures from the NSFG's "Attitudes towards sex, contraception, marriage, gender and parenthood" sections (JG-JH). EFA (described in more detail later in this document) was conducted to develop an index for this emergent variable. EFA helped to determine if the items for attitudes towards sex, contraception, marriage, gender and parenthood load on a single factor and if it was appropriate to state that men's level of traditional masculinity ideology defines the substantive content of the items (DeVellis, 2012). EFA was chosen over a confirmatory factor analysis because the relationship between cause indicators (i.e., variables for attitudes towards sex, contraception, marriage, gender and parenthood) and the construct of traditional masculinity ideology in this dataset was unclear. The measures that were identified for inclusion in the factor analysis had Likert scale response options: [Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree (options only used if respondent insisted on a neutral response to this measure)]

> **JG-1:** It is better for a person to get married than to go through life being single. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?
>
> **JG-3:** Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are all right.
>
> **JG-6a:** People can't be really happy unless they have children.
>
> **JG-7:** The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes.
>
> **JG-9:** Gay or lesbian adults should have the right to adopt children.
>
> **JG-12:** It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family.

JG-13: It is more important for a man to spend a lot of time with his family than to be successful at his career.

JG-15: If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you a great deal, some, a little, or not at all? [A Great Deal, Some, A little, Not At All]

JG-21: What is the chance that you will get married (again) someday? [No Chance, A Little Chance, 50-50 Chance, A Pretty Good Chance, An Almost Certain Chance]

The eigenvalue and scree plot criteria described by DeVellis (2012) were used to determine how many factors to retain for the items from the NSFG's section on "Attitudes towards sex, contraception, marriage, gender and parenthood." The factors with eigenvalues greater than the point of the intersection for the lines representing median eigenvalues and the scree plot of actual data were retained for further analysis. Participants' raw scores on the items from the "Attitudes towards sex, contraception, marriage, gender and parenthood" section were converted to z-scores. These z-scores were then summed in order to determine the men's level of traditional masculinity ideology (Subramanyam et al., 2013).

Moderators

Traditional Masculinity Ideology. Please see above for description.

Respectability Masculinity (SS). Please see above for description.

Covariates

Age. The question, "(First, I'd like to know your age and date of birth.) How old are you?" is used to assess respondents' ages. This is an open-ended questions with no predetermined response options.

Marital/Cohabitation Status. This was assessed using the NSFG's measure on marital/cohabitating status. **Asked in Year 1:** What is your current marital status? [Married; Not married but living with a partner of the opposite sex; Widowed; Divorced; Separated, because you and your spouse are not getting along; Never been married]. **Asked Starting in Year 2:** What is your current marital or cohabiting status? [Same response categories as for Year 1]

Hard Drug Use. Hard drug use was assessed using the NSFG's measures on cocaine, crack, crystal methamphetamine, and non-prescription injection drug use in the last 12 months. Respondents were asked, "During the last 12 months, how often have you used cocaine/crack/crystal or meth, also known as tina, crank, or ice/shot up or injected drugs other than those prescribed for you? By shooting up, we mean anytime you might have used drugs with a needle, by mainlining, skin-popping, or muscling? [Never; Once or twice during the year; Several times during the year; About once a month or more]. Respondents were classified as hard drug users if they indicated having used one or more of these substances at least once in the past 12 months.

Sampling Design

All analyses accounted for the continuous sampling design of the 2006-2010 wave of the NSFG by using the sampling weights provided in the dataset. SAS software for Windows, version 9.4 (SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC) was used to conduct all statistical analyses.

Power Analysis/Sample Size

Given the small number of TGNC men in the NSFG dataset, a power analysis using Fisher's Exact Test was conducted to ensure that there were enough TGNC men in the sample to achieve at least 80% power. The results of this calculation are provided in below in Figure 3. The results of the power Fisher's Exact Test yielded at statistical power of 97%. These results

suggested a very high ability to detect the effect of sexual orientation on the odds of engaging in concurrency among the study sample, if such an effect actually exists.

Figure 3: Fisher's Exact Test to Calculate Power

The POWER Procedure
Fisher's Exact Conditional Test for Two Proportions

Fixed Scenario Elements	
Distribution	Exact conditional
Method	Walters normal approximation
Number of Sides	2
Group 1 Proportion	0.2
Group 2 Proportion	0.4
Group 1 Sample Size	1783
Group 2 Sample Size	85
Alpha	0.05

Computed Power
Power
0.972

Data Cleaning: Dates of Sex for Partnerships

To properly execute the analytic plan for Aims 1 and 2, data cleaning was necessary to ensure that the dates of sex for the reported partnerships were correct and in order. The PROC Print procedure was used to identify the first and last dates of sex for the respondents' most recent partners (up to three) and current wife/cohabitating partner. A visual inspection of these partnership dates revealed four distinct issues which could cause problems when classifying respondents as sexually concurrent or non-concurrent. These four problems were: (1) the first and/or last dates of sex matching for multiple partners; (2) the dates of first or last dates of sex for a partnership was reported as 9997 (Not ascertained), 9998 (Don't Know), or 9999 (Refused);

(3) the dates of first or last sex for a partnership was missing when the other was reported; and (4) non-chronological first and last dates of sex within individual partnerships and between different partnerships (e.g., last date of sex for older partner is listed as occurring after last date of sex for more recent partner). Data cleaning to address these four problems was conducted in the order in which they are listed above.

The first step was to determine if the cases with matching partnership dates of sex were the same or different partnerships. The process involved with this first step of data cleaning is depicted in Figure 4. It was assumed that the cases with matching partnership dates were the same for those cases who only reported one partnership in the last twelve months. One set of dates was deleted and the other retained for further analyses. Next, for the remaining cases with matching partnership dates, the variables P1Cohabit, P2Cohabit, and P3Cohabit were inspected to determine if the respondents indicated that their current wife/cohabitating partner is the same as one of the three most recent partners for which dates of sex were reported. If the respondent reported that their current wife/cohabitating partner was one of their most recent partners, one set of dates was deleted and the other retained for further analyses. Finally, for the remaining cases with matching partnership dates, the dates of first sex were observed to determine if they were the same or different for the partnerships with matching dates. If they were different, both partnerships were retained for further analyses. If the dates of first sex were the same or missing for the partnerships, then they were excluded from further analyses. This resulted in the exclusion of 43 partnerships.

Figure 4: Data Cleaning Steps for Partnerships with Matching Dates of Sex

First and/or last date of sex match for MRP & CWP (Matching Sex Dates) (N=574 cases; 581 partnerships)

- **Step 1: Observe # of partners reported in last 12 months**
- If number of partners reported in last 12 months =1, assume reported partnerships are the same and only include one in analyses (N=485 cases; 486 partnerships)
- If number of partners reported in last 12 months ≠ 1, proceed with step 2 (N=89 cases; 95 partnerships)

Matching Sex Dates # of partners ≠ 1 (N=89 cases; 95 partnerships)

- Step 2: Observe responses to P1-P3Cohabit items to determine if CWP and MRP are the same person
- If same person, only include one in analyses (N= 48 cases; 48 partnerships)
- If not same person, proceed with step 3 (N= 41 cases; 47partnerships)

Matching Sex Dates # of partners ≠ 1 CWP & MRP not Same Person (N=41 cases; 47 partnerships)

- **Step 3: Observe the dates of first sex for each of the partnerships**
- If the different dates of first sex, include each partnership in the analyses (N=2 cases; 4 partnerships)
- If the dates of first sex are not different for the partnerships or missing, exlude partnerships from analyses (N=40 cases; 43 partnerships).

The next step in the data cleaning process (Figure 5) was to address those partnerships where dates of sex were missing. Missing dates were indicated by a response of 9997, 9998, or 9999, corresponding with Not Ascertained, Refused, and Don't Know, respectively. Missing dates were also indicated by a response of "." for the date of first sex when the date of last sex was reported or vice versa. For those cases with responses of 9997-9, if only set of partnership dates were reported for the respondent, then the first and last dates of sex were made the same and these partnerships were retained for further analyses. If more than one set of partnership dates were reported, then the partnership was eliminated from further analyses. This resulted in the exclusion of 46 partnerships from 38 cases. Fifteen cases were totally excluded.

Figure 5: Data Cleaning Steps for Partnerships with 9997, 99998, 9999 (Missing) Dates of Sex
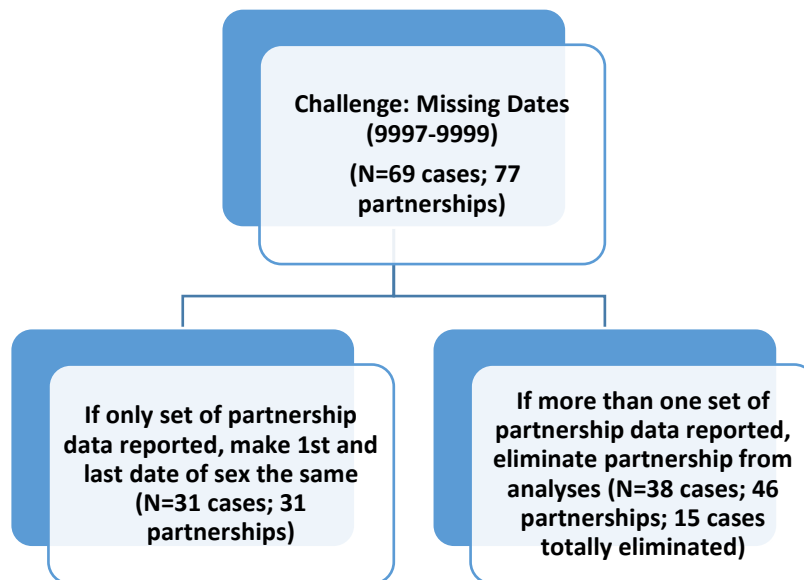
Step three in the data cleaning process (Figure 6) involved cases with a response of "." (Missing) for the date of first sex when the date of last sex was reported or vice versa. If only set of partnership dates were reported for the respondent, then the first and last dates of sex were made the same and these partnerships were retained for further analyses. If more than one set of

partnership dates were reported, then one of the partnerships was eliminated from further analyses. This resulted in the exclusion of 254 partnerships from 173 cases. Fifteen cases were totally excluded.

Figure 6: Data Cleaning Steps for Partnerships with Missing Dates of Sex
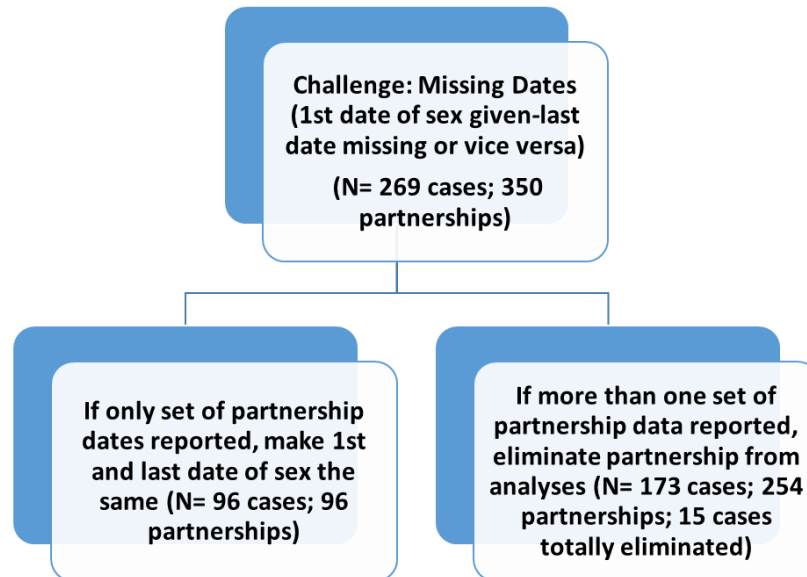
The final step in the data cleaning process (Figure 7) was to address the non-chronological dates of sex within and between partnerships. For the four cases where the date of last sex for a partnership is listed as occurring before the date of first sex for that same partnership, it was assumed that there was an error in inputting these dates into the data set. The dates were rearranged to make the earlier date the first date of sex and the latter the last date of sex. This method for handling non-chronological dates is similar to those used in previous concurrency-related studies (Fishel, Ortiz, & Barrére, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2015). These partnerships were then retained for further analyses. For the thirteen cases where the date of last sex for an older partner is listed as occurring after the date of last sex for a more recent partner, it was also assumed that there was an error in inputting these dates into the data set. The partnerships were rearranged so that the partnership which last date of sex is the latest is listed as the most recent partner, the partnership

with the second latest date of last sex is listed as the second most recent partner, and, if applicable, the partnership with the third latest date of last sex is listed as the third most recent partner.

Figure 7: Data Cleaning Steps for Non-Chronological Dates of Sex
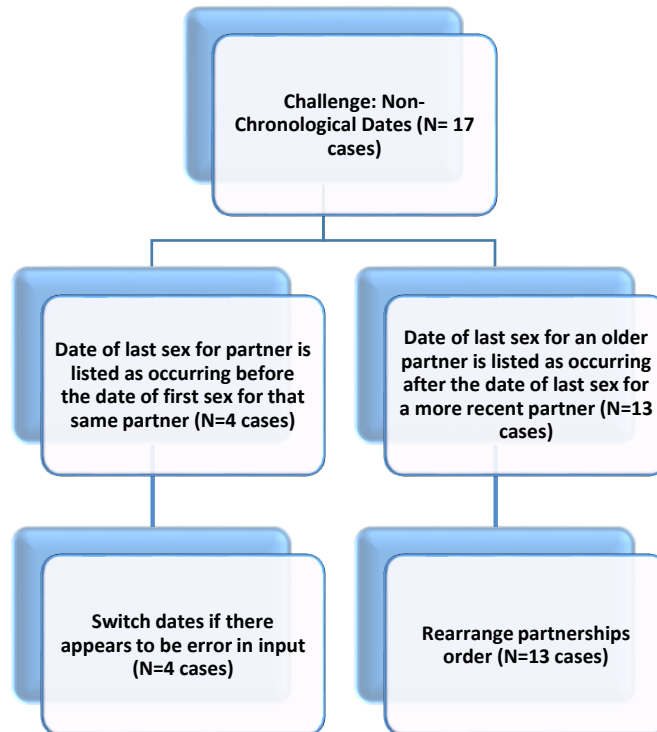
The result of these four data cleaning steps was the elimination of 877 partnerships and exclusion of 30 cases from analyses.

Factor Analysis

The next step in the quantitative analyses process was to determine to determine if the NSFG items for attitudes towards sex, contraception, marriage, gender and parenthood load on a single factor and if it was appropriate to state that men's level of traditional masculinity ideology defines the substantive content of the items The PROC CORR procedure was used to calculate a Cronbach's Alpha statistic, a measure of internal consistency, among the nine candidate items

for the traditional masculinity ideologies exploratory factor analysis. An Alpha value of 0.54 showed poor internal consistency among the items—indicating that they may not measure the same underlying latent variable.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha Statistic for Nine Factor Analysis Items

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	**Alpha**
Raw	0.555307
Standardized	0.541783

To determine if dropping some items would improve the internal consistency among the items, a Pearson's correlation matrix was created to observe the associations between the nine items. The FAMILY item had negative correlations with many of the other items and its largest correlation with another item was 0.02. Therefore, FAMILY was restricted from the analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha statistic was recalculated resulting in a considerable increase in alpha to 0.62-- indicating greater internal consistency among the remaining eight items. Therefore, FAMILY was excluded from further analyses.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha Statistic for Factor Analysis Items without FAMILY

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	**Alpha**
Raw	0.620336
Standardized	0.616866

PROC FACTOR was used to conduct an exploratory factor analysis on the eight remaining items. The prior probabilities of group membership was set to SMC to specify extracting common factors rather than principal components. Oblique (PROMAX) rotation used because it was believed that if multiple factors were extracted then they would be correlated with one another in that they each tap into different aspect of men's masculinity ideologies (e.g., views of homosexuality, procreation/fatherhood, and providership). The results of the factor analysis

indicated that two factors should be retained. This determination was made using both the scree

plot (Figure 8) and proportion criterion methodologies (Table 5) for determining factor retention.
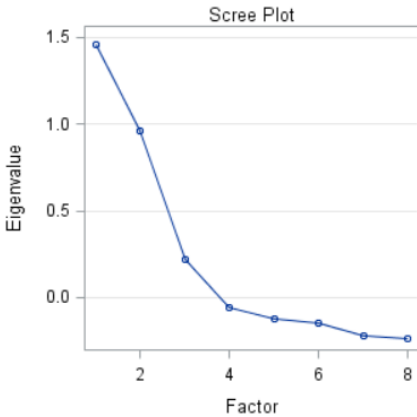
Figure 8: Scree Plot　　　　　　　　　　**Table 5: Eigenvalue Correlation Matrix**

Eigenvalues of the Reduced Correlation Matrix: Total = 1.84883634 Average = 0.23110454				
	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
1	1.46156385	0.50057333	0.7905	0.7905
2	0.96099052	0.74539566	0.5198	1.3103
3	0.21559487	0.27167027	0.1166	1.4269
4	-.05607540	0.07071418	-0.0303	1.3966
5	-.12678958	0.01963331	-0.0686	1.3280
6	-.14642289	0.07244924	-0.0792	1.2488
7	-.21887213	0.02228076	-0.1184	1.1304
8	-.24115289		-0.1304	1.0000

Once the number of factors to retain was determined, factor rotation was conducted to

increase the interpretability of the factors by identifying items clustered around the factors. Two

items, GAYADOPT and SAMESEX, had a high loading (greater than 0.50) on Factor 1. Another

(ACHIEVE) had a relatively high loading of 0.49 on Factor 1. Three items, MARRCHANCE,

CHBOTHER, and BETTER had high loading on Factor 2. CHREWARD had a relatively high

loading of 0.44 on Factor 2. Given this information, Cronbach Alpha's statistics were computed

for the two scales representing the items with high loadings on Factors 1 and 2. The alpha value

was calculated at 0.67 for the items loading onto Factor 1 and 0.63 for Factor 2. Additional

analyses revealed that dropping the relatively high loading ACHIEVE item from Factor 1 would

increase the Cronbach's Alpha to 0.72—above the 0.70 threshold which has been established as

an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha for scale internal consistency (Devellis, 2012). Dropping any of

the items loading on Factor 2 would not increase the Alpha value enough to surpass the 0.70

threshold. Therefore, given the questionable level of internal consistency of the items loading on

Factor 2, it was dropped from the study. The retained Factor 1 was named "heteronormativity" to

reflect the belief that the two items (GAYADOPT and SAMESEX) loading on this factor are a reflection of respondents' endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies around heterosexual normality.

Analysis Plan

The full analyses for this dissertation began once the factor analysis process was completed. Engagement in concurrency was modeled using logistic regression. The SAS command, PROC Logistic, was used for analyses of hypothesized the relationships between respectability masculinity and engagement in concurrency, and between traditional masculinity ideology and concurrency.

Regression procedures were run to test the moderating effect of traditional masculinity ideology on the relationship between respectability masculinity and engagement in concurrency. Moderation testing will also be conducted to determine the effect of SS on the association between TGNC sexual orientation and engagement in concurrency. Tests of moderation were conducted using the procedures detailed by Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004). Effects coding was used to determine how membership in various groups impacts the odds of engaging in concurrency. As discussed previously, all sampling weights provided with the NSFG were included in all regression procedures.

<u>Qualitative Methods</u>

The goal of this dissertation's qualitative analyses was to conduct a more in-depth exploration of how Black men construct their masculinity ideologies using respectability and reputational mechanisms and how these ideologies, along with stress and coping processes, facilitate or impede their engagement in concurrency.

Qualitative Research Aims

The qualitative analyses were guided by the following research aims:

Aim 1 Utilize qualitative data from the Concurrency Media Study to explore the influence of masculinity ideologies, masculinity norms, personal values, and masculine role strain on Black men's relationship satisfaction, stress-coping behaviors, and engagement in concurrency.

Aim 2: Explore underlying cognitions and affective experiences shaping Black men's masculine role strain and their impact on concurrency.

Study Points of Inquiry

The goals of these qualitative analyses were to:

1. Explicate the reasons Black men cite for and against engaging in concurrency.
2. Use BMLMC as a guide to assess the impact of respectability and reputational masculinities, as well as masculine role strain, relationship dissatisfaction, and stress-coping processes on Black men's engagement in concurrency.
3. Identify potential strategies for addressing more harmful masculinity ideologies, masculine role strain, and stress and coping responses in future interventions targeting concurrency among Black men.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 9 was developed for this dissertation and depicts the hypothesized process by which men manage their thoughts and feelings around concurrency. The model uses concepts from TMSC, SCT, BMLMC, and Masculine Role Strain theory to

construct a framework for exploring how men's cognitions influence engagement in concurrency as a stress-coping response.

Figure 9: Qualitative Conceptual Framework
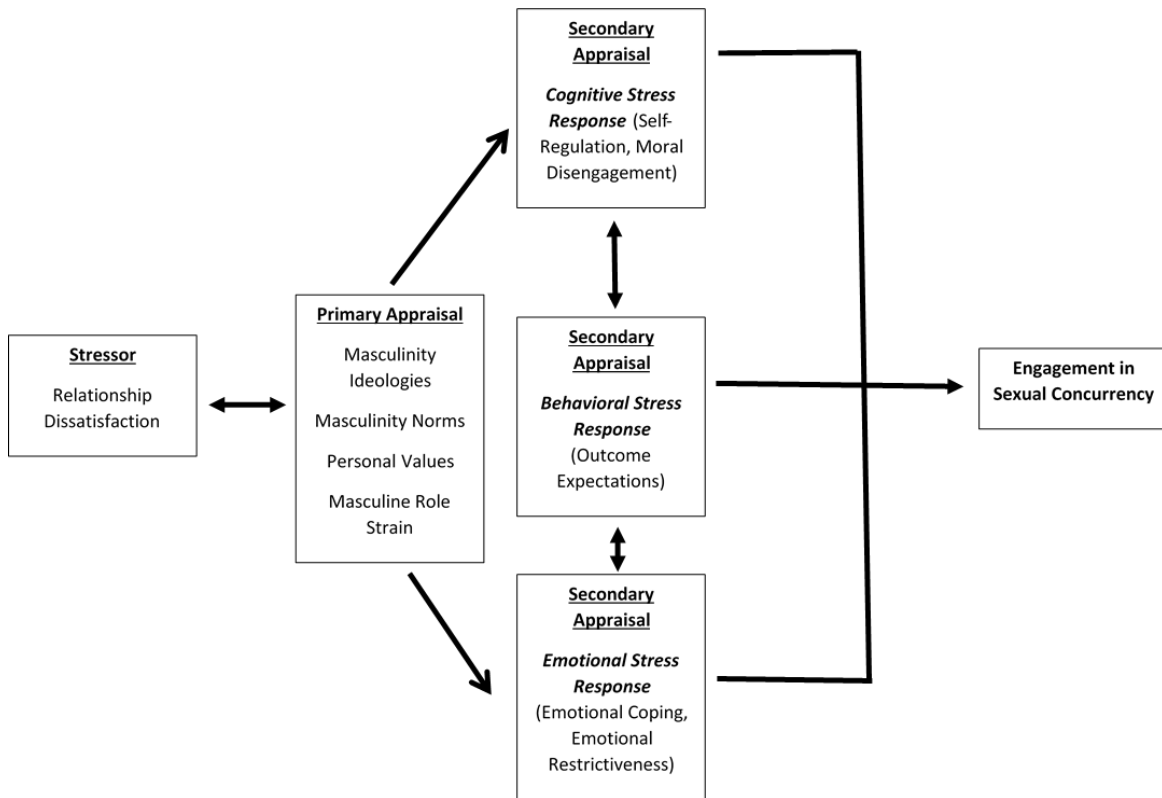
The qualitative portion of this dissertation used this conceptual framework as the basis for exploring men's relationship dissatisfaction as a potential stressor. The appraisal of this potential stressor is hypothetically influenced by masculinity norms, men's masculinity ideologies, personal values, and masculine role strain. The framework also structured the exploration of how these factors exert an influence on men's primary appraisal of their relationship dissatisfaction and perception of that dissatisfaction as a relevant, benign, or stressful threat. Further analysis of the data sought to determine if concurrency is used by men as a stress-coping response when they perceive relationship dissatisfaction as a stressful threat.

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The application of this framework grounded the exploration of the various ways that men might consciously and/or subconsciously appraise the threat of relationship dissatisfaction to determine how to act on the threat. This framework suggests that appraisal includes a cognitive, behavioral, and emotional stress response, which influence one another and work collectively to impact men's concurrency behavior. The cognitive stress response conceptualized in this framework includes elements of self-regulation, which entails men's efforts to control their desire to seek relationship satisfaction elsewhere, such as with a different romantic/sexual partner, leading to engagement in concurrency. The cognitive stress response also includes elements of moral disengagement, which involve the process of persuasive reasoning men use to justify their engagement in concurrency, such as it's in a man's nature to have multiple partners to fulfill different needs. The conceptual framework for this dissertation suggests that the behavioral stress response is shaped by outcome expectations, or men's assessments of whether concurrency will alleviate relationship dissatisfaction stress. The framework conceptualizes the emotional stress response as entailing elements of emotional coping, or strategies men employ to effectively manage their emotions, thoughts, and feelings associated with stress induced by relationship dissatisfaction. It further suggests that negative emotional coping includes engagement in risk behaviors, such as concurrency. Emotional coping responses are posited to be influenced by emotional restrictiveness, which can impede men's self-efficacy to communicate their romantic, sexual, and emotional needs/desires to their partners. Emotional restrictiveness can be elicited by men's fear of rejection or being viewed as unmanly/non-masculine for having said needs and desires.

Overall, the theoretical framework guided the qualitative research questions, aims, and points of inquiry directed at understanding the various influences on Black men's engagement in

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concurrency. The framework also aided in the development of the codes that were used to categorize and organize the focus group text into themes around relationship dissatisfaction, masculinities, personal values, and masculine role strain, and their influence on Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. Finally, the conceptual framework for the qualitative section of this dissertation provided a roadmap for investigating men's discourse around emotional restrictiveness and its perceived impact on their ability to openly communicate their romantic, sexual, or emotional desires to their partners and negotiate with these partners to have their needs met.

Position of the Author

The author of this paper self-identifies as a Black male who conducts HIV prevention research with Black men and seeks to move beyond common pathological explanations for men's engagement in sexual risk behaviors. The author sought to explore social, cultural, and political systems which shape health behaviors—including engagement in concurrency. Focusing the public health field's attention on social constructions of masculinity ideologies, how these ideologies place men's health in peril, and how men are socialized to endorse and enact these ideologies can help shift some of the onus for sexual risk reduction from individuals to the societies and systems which develop and promote social norms or ideologies fueling HIV risk behaviors.

Additionally, the author explicitly sought to resist portraying Black men as sexual deviants in the HIV and sexual health literature. Highlighting the role of masculinity socialization of boys and men will help to demonstrate that their (risky) sexual behaviors are often a result of the manner in which they have been socialized to project masculinity rather than a reflection of reckless or predatory individual sexual behaviors. The author wished to highlight

the manner in which Black boys and men are socialized to value reputational masculinity in ways that may place them at risk for overreliance on maladaptive stress-coping strategies and negative health outcomes. In an attempt to accomplish these goals, special attention was given to trying to more fully understand concurrency among Black men by further examining the sociocultural factors (e.g., traditional masculinity norms) driving the behavior and HIV infection among Black men.

Study Design

Data for the qualitative component of this dissertation was drawn from a larger study to investigate the acceptability of a radio media campaign designed to reduce concurrency-related HIV risk for individuals living in North Carolina counties with high rates of HIV. Focus groups were used in this study to gather information to develop HIV-prevention radio ads. The goals of the radio ads were to (1) raise awareness among Blacks in Eastern North Carolina about the HIV risk associated with concurrency and (2) reduce the number of individuals who engage in the behavior. To accomplish these goals, the researchers held three focus groups with Black men living in Edgecombe and Nash Counties, North Carolina. The goals of the focus groups were to:

- Understand how concurrency is discussed among Black men and in their communities

- Understand the context in which concurrency occurs

- Learn and extract words, phrases, and scenarios that would be effective at getting individuals to reduce their number of concurrent sexual partnerships, and

- Pilot test the men's acceptance of sample radio messages addressing concurrency which were developed prior to the focus groups.

Study Participants

Focus group participants were recruited using study advertisement flyers which were placed throughout community-based organizations located in the intervention counties. A total of 28 Black men participated in the study. The majority of the men (79%) had a high school/GED education, or above, 20 of the 28 of the men had never been married, four were living with their partners, one was separated, one was divorced, and two did not respond to the marital status question on the demographic survey. The men were divided into three focus groups – one for men ages 18-24 years, which had eight participants, and two for men ages 25-34 years, which each had ten participants. Focus group participants were divided into age-based groups because the research team believed that the factors influencing engagement in concurrency would differ for the younger Black men (ages 18-24 years) when compared to those for the older men in the sample (ages 25-34 years). The focus groups were facilitated by an older Black male media consultant hired to assist with the development of the radio media campaign ads and other study materials. The focus groups each lasted approximately two hours and covered a variety of topics related to concurrency. The focus groups were video-taped and audio-recorded. The audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim. Men were compensated with a $25 gift card for their participation.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Directed Content Analysis

Directed Content Analysis was used as a guiding framework for the qualitative exploration of factors driving concurrency and HIV infection among Black men. Directed Content Analysis is an approach used to analyze verbal and written text. The goal of Directed Content Analysis is to substantiate or expand on prior research or an existing theoretical

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framework used to explain a social phenomenon such as concurrency (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed Content Analysis has recently been used in other qualitative studies exploring sexual health themes among samples of Black men (Hidalgo, Cotton, Johnson, Kuhs, & Garofalo, 2013; Martos, Valera, Bockting, & Wilson, 2016). This deductive approach is useful for developing initial codes that reflect a priori theories and hypotheses (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Martos et al., 2016).

Directed Content Analysis was utilized for this dissertation to assess the words and phrases used to discuss masculinities and concurrency, and the contexts in which these two concepts are developed and performed. More specifically, concepts from the theories informing this dissertation (BMLMC, Masculine Role Strain, SCT, and TMSC) guided the application of Directed Content Analysis in the exploration of how masculinities vary among Black men in the sample and how these variations influence stress-coping behaviors, including engagement in concurrency.

Critical Emancipatory Epistemology

This study's Directed Content Analysis was further informed and refined by a Critical Emancipatory epistemology. This critical paradigm is grounded in the belief that reality can be understood through its historical construction and relation to power (Harvard University, 2008). Its goal is to understand how factors such as race, gender, culture, and the media influence identity development. Moreover, it seeks to bring about social change through the documentation and sharing of marginalized groups' (i.e., Black men) experiences with social inequity (Emerson, 2001). The focus of the critical emancipatory epistemology on knowledge sharing, sociocultural influences, and social transformation makes it an appealing research paradigm for this

dissertation. Application of this epistemology helped to enhance the content analysis of the focus group discourse by:

- Focusing the directed content analysis on the sociocultural factors which influence the participants' construction of their masculinities.

- Concentrating the analysis on understanding the perceived power (masculine strength) garnered through concurrency engagement

- Promoting social transformation through the identification and analysis of the sociocultural factors, particularly masculinities, and stress-coping behaviors, which the men in the focus groups cite as motivations or deterrents of concurrency.

Codebook

Coding of the focus group data was guided by a codebook developed for this dissertation. This codebook included six basic components: the code, a brief definition, a full definition, guidelines for when to use the code, guidelines for when not to use the code, and examples (MacQueen, McLellan, Kay, & Milstein, 1998). The codebook contained thirty codes organized into categories based on the theoretical frameworks (Masculine Role Strain, Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, Big Man Little Man Complex, and Social Cognitive Theory) guiding the comprehensive theoretical framework developed for this dissertation. Additionally, a category for concurrency was created to capture information (e.g., descriptors, reasons for or against engaging in the behavior) related to the behavior. A miscellaneous category was also created to capture other, but less frequently described reasons for men's relationship dissatisfaction, types of romantic or sexual relationships they desire, and their suggestions for concurrency-related health promotion interventions.

Inter-Coder Reliability

Prior to coding the focus group transcripts, inter-coder reliability was calculated to help ensure fidelity of the codes and avoid misinterpretation of the data. Inter-coder reliability measures how often multiple independent coders examine the meaning of a block of text and arrive at the same conclusion as to the meaning of that text (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000). The author and another research assistant for the Concurrency Media Study used the codebook to guide the coding of approximately ten percent (28 pages) of the total focus groups' transcripts. The Coding Analysis Toolkit (http://cat.texifter.com) was used to calculate a Cohen's Kappa value to indicate the level of agreement among the two coders regarding the application of the codes to the text of the focus groups' transcripts. A Kappa value of 0.68 was achieved, indicating a substantial level of agreement among the coders about the meaning of the coded text (McHugh, 2012) and addressing some of the author's concerns about overreaching in his interpretations of the data.

Data Coding Process

After completing the inter-coder reliability process, the author proceeded with coding and analyzing the transcripts from all three focus groups. The directed content analysis method described earlier (see pages 64-65) was used as the guiding analytic framework for this dissertation. Additionally, multiple strategies for coding and interpreting the data were used. These strategies included computer-assisted coding using the software program Atlas ti version 7.5, line-by-line coding and hand coding of the transcripts, and data tables to compare data across the three focus groups. Analytic memoing, which facilitates the process of documenting reflections about the data analysis process (e.g., coding, emerging themes and theories) (Saldaña, 2009), was used to organize the data and results by identifying emergent patterns related to the connection between masculinity ideologies, stress-coping behaviors, and engagement in

concurrency. Memoing assisted with connecting these emergent patterns to Whitehead's Big Man-Little Man Complex, TMSC, SCT, masculine role strain theories. Finally, memoing encouraged my use of reflexivity throughout the data analysis process. Specifically, it pushed the author to continually examine his own connection as a Black man to the Black men in the focus groups, how he relates to their discussions about masculinity ideologies, stress and coping, and engagement in concurrency, his role as a HIV researcher and interventionists, and how these factors impacted his analyses of the data. The results of these analytic processes revealed Black men's descriptions of concurrency, beliefs and attitudes about this behavior, and illuminated the influence of masculinities, relationship dissatisfaction, and stress-coping responses on men's engagement in concurrency.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE AIM 1 FINDINGS- THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN RESPECTABILITY MASCULINITY AND CONCURRENCY

In chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, a literature review, theoretical rationale, and analytical methods for the studies undertaken were provided. In this chapter, the results and implications for Aim 1 are discussed.

Results

Demographics of the Eligible Sample

1712 of the 2008 Black male respondents in the NSFG had at least one complete set of partnerships dates and were eligible for this study. The weighted mean age for the sample was 29.7 years. TGC men made up the largest proportion (93.1%) of the men. Most (69.1%) had attained at least a high school diploma/GED and the largest proportion of the men (48.8%) had never been married. Table 6 contains more information on the demographic characteristics of the sample for this dissertation study.

Direct Effect of Respectability Masculinity (SS) on Concurrency

Aim 1 of this dissertation sought to explore the direct and moderated associations between respectability masculinity (operationalized as SS and sexual orientation) and Black men's engagement in concurrency**.** It was hypothesized that lower levels of respectability masculinity (conceptualized as low SS and TGNC sexual orientation) would be associated with greater odds of engaging in concurrency. It was also hypothesized that SS would moderate the association between lower respectability masculinity (TGNC sexual orientation) and concurrency such that the association between lower respectability masculinity and greater odds

of engaging in concurrency would be enhanced at lower levels of respectability masculinity

(lower SS) when compared to higher levels of respectability masculinity (higher SS).

Table 6: NSFG/Dissertation Sample Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Weighted Mean or Percentage (rounded)
Sexual Orientation	
Traditional gender conforming	**93.1%**
Traditional gender non-conforming	**7.0%**
Age (mean)	29.7 years
Education	
Less than HS	30.9%
HS Graduate/GED	31.0%
Some College	22.3%
Associates Degree	4.6%
Bachelor's Degree	9.0%
Graduate/Professional Degree	2.3%
Marital/Cohabitating Status	
Married	30.0%
Not married, living together with opposite sex partner	15.6%
Widowed	0.1%
Divorced	3.0%
Separated, you and your spouse not getting along	2.5%
Never been married	48.8%

Table 7 contains the results of unadjusted and adjusted logistic regression analyses

examining the association between respectability masculinity (SS) and sociodemographic

characteristics on the odds of engaging in concurrency. In unadjusted analyses, respectability

masculinity (SS) was significantly and positively associated with concurrency, while home

ownership status was significantly and negatively associated with concurrency. In multivariate

models, which adjusted for age, marital status, and hard drug use, the association between

respectability masculinity (SS) and concurrency remained significantly positive. The odds of

concurrency was significantly greater (AOR: 1.19, 95% CI: 1.18-1.19, p<.0001) for respondents who reported renting their home when compared to the odds of those who reported owning their home. A 1 SD increase in respectability masculinity (SS) was significantly associated with a 0.97 decreased odds of concurrency (95% CI: 0.97-0.97, p<.0001).

Direct Effect of Respectability Masculinity (TGNC vs. Heterosexual Orientation) on Concurrency

Table 8 contains the results of models examining the influence of respectability masculinity (TGNC) on the odds of engaging in concurrency. In unadjusted analyses, respectability masculinity (TGNC) was significantly and negatively associated with concurrency. In multivariate models, adjusted for age, marital status, and hard drug use, the odds of engaging in concurrency was significantly lower (AOR: 0.55, 95% CI 0.55, 0.56, p<.0001) for TGNC men when compared to heterosexual men. In other words, TGNC men had lower odds of concurrency than TGC men.

SS-Moderated Effect of Respectability Masculinity (TGNC) on Concurrency

Analyses were conducted to test whether respectability masculinity (SS) moderated the association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency. A product term representing the interaction between both forms of respectability masculinity (TGNC & SS) was created and entered into the multivariate logistic regression model. The coefficient of the interaction term was statistically significant (β=0.37, p<.0001) indicating a moderating effect of respectability masculinity (SS) on the association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency. Post-hoc analysis of the interaction revealed that SS differentially moderated the association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency for TGC and TGNC men. Figure 11 demonstrates that as the level of respectability masculinity (SS) rose (labeled as

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economic masculine strength or EMS in Figure 10) for TGC men (EMS at TGNC=0), the

negative association (odds ratio) between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency

was attenuated, however the association remained negative or less than 1 (AOR=0.96, 95% CI:

0.95-0.96). In contrast, for TGNC men (EMS at TGNC=1), as their level of respectability

masculinity (SS) rose, the negative association (odds ratio) between respectability masculinity

(TGNC) and concurrency was reversed increasing TGNC men's odds of engaging in

concurrency and changing the direction of the association between respectability masculinity

(TGNC) and concurrency from negative to positive (AOR=1.38, 95% CI: 1.37-1.39).

Table 7: Respectability Masculinity (SS) and Concurrency among Black Men (N=1709)

	Unadjusted Crude Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Model 1 Respect Masc. (SS) AOR (95% CI)	Model 2 Respect Masc. (Home Own) AOR (95% CI)	Model 3 Full Model AOR (95% CI)
Respect. Masculinity (SS)	1.29 (1.29-1.29)***	0.96 (0.96-0.96)***	-----	0.97 (0.97-0.97)***
Home Ownership Status	0.86 (0.86-0.86)***	-----	1.22 (1.22-1.23)***	1.19 (1.18-1.19)***
Age	1.09 (1.09-1.09)***	0.99 (0.99-0.99)***	0.99 (0.99-0.99)***	0.99 (0.99-0.99)***
Marital Status	0.29 (0.29-0.29)***	0.27 (0.27-0.27)***	0.27 (0.27-0.27)***	0.27 (0.27-0.27)***
Cocaine Use	0.84 (0.83-0.84)***	0.92 (0.91-0.93)***	0.95 (0.93-0.96)***	0.94 (0.93-0.95)***
Crack Use	0.90 (0.90-0.91)***	1.33 (1.30-1.35)***	1.31 (1.28-1.33)***	1.27 (1.25-1.29)***
Crystal Meth Use	0.91 (0.91-0.91)***	3.23 (3.17-3.23)***	3.28 (3.22-3.34)***	3.24 (3.19-3.30)***
Inject Non-Prescription Drugs	0.85 (0.85-0.85)***	0.18 (0.18-0.19)***	0.18 (0.18-0.19)***	0.19 (0.19-0.19)***

***p<.0001   AOR=Adjusted Odds Ratio   CI=Confidence Interval

Table 8: Respectability Masculinity (TGNC) and Concurrency among Black Men (N=1709)

	Unadjusted Crude Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Model 1 Respect Masc. (TGNC) AOR (95% CI)	Model 2 Full Model AOR (95% CI)
Respect. Masculinity (TGNC)	0.27 (0.26-0.27)***	0.55 (0.55-0.56)***	0.56 (0.55-0.56)***
Respect. Masculinity (SS)	1.29 (1.29-1.29)***	-----	0.97 (0.97-0.97)***
Home Ownership Status	0.86 (0.86-0.86)***	-----	1.20 (1.19-1.20)***
Age	1.09 (1.09-1.09)***	0.99 (0.99-0.99)***	0.99 (0.99-0.99)***
Marital Status	0.29 (0.29-0.29)***	0.27 (0.27-0.27)***	0.27 (0.27-0.27)***
Cocaine Use	0.84 (0.83-0.84)***	0.91 (0.90-0.92)***	0.94 (0.92-0.95)***
Crack Use	0.90 (0.90-0.91)***	1.46 (1.44-1.49)***	1.33 (1.31-1.35)***
Crystal Meth Use	0.91 (0.91-0.91)***	3.39 (3.33-3.46)***	3.35 (3.29-3.42)***
Inject Non-Prescription Drugs	0.85 (0.85-0.85)***	0.17 (0.16-0.17)***	0.18 (0.18-0.18)***

***p<.0001   AOR=Adjusted Odds Ratio   CI=Confidence Interval

Figure 10: Interaction Effects of Respectability Masculinity (SS & TGNC) on Concurrency
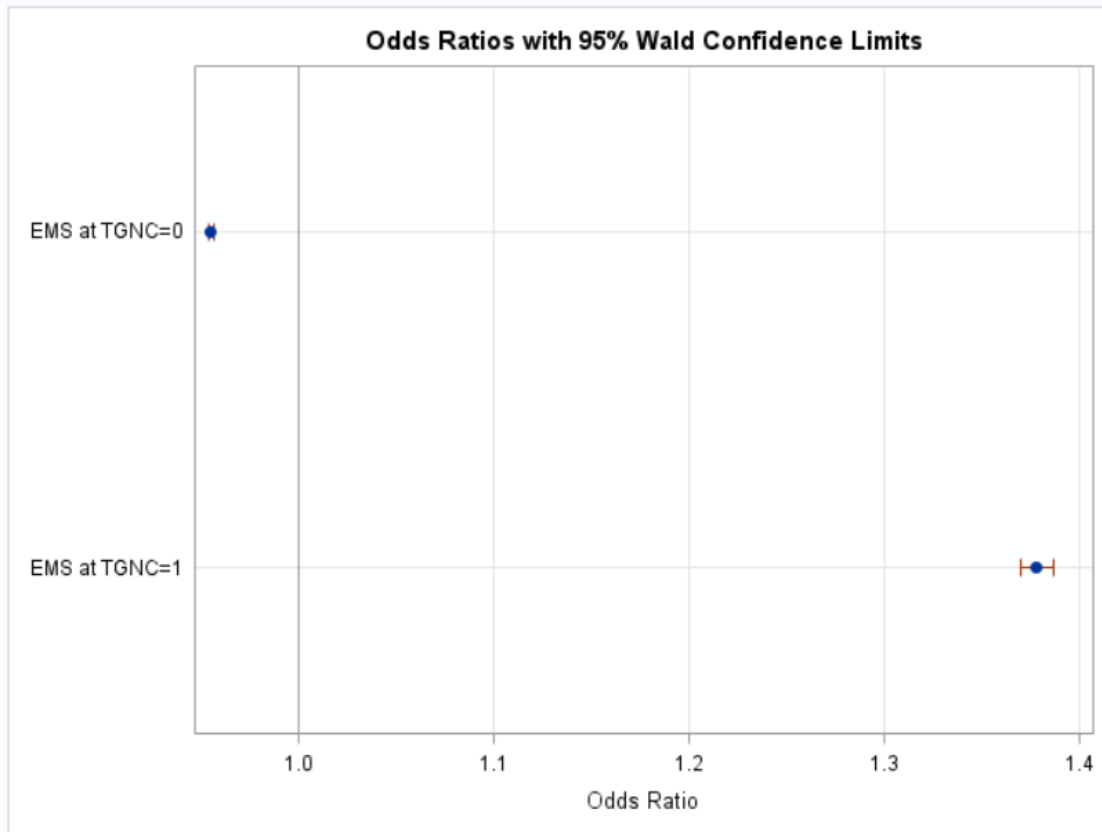
AIM 1 Discussion

These analyses sought to examine the impact of various forms of respectability masculinity on Black men's odds of engaging in concurrency. Hypotheses 1-1 of this dissertation is partially supported by the results of the Aim 1 analyses. As hypothesized, lower levels of respectability masculinity, operationalized in this dissertation as low SS, were significantly associated with greater odds of engaging in concurrency. These findings suggest the collective influence of men's income, educational level, and income stability exerted an important influence on their concurrency behavior. Additionally, men who were home owners, another

marker of financial success and demonstration of respectability masculinity, had lower odds of engaging in concurrency when compared to those Black men who rented their homes.

Together, these results provide support for the assertions put forth by the BMLMC framework (Whitehead, 1997; Whitehead et al., 1994) and this dissertation's theoretical framework which posit that higher respectability (being a "Big Man") results in less reliance among Black men in the sample on reputational aspects of masculine strength. In the presence of high SS and a greater capacity to build masculine strength through respectability, men may experience a less fragmented gender self and less stress in the form of discrepancy masculine role strain. This group of Black men may also experience a greater sense of being able to fulfill ideals proscribed by traditional masculinity ideologies (i.e., financially stable) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Thompson & Pleck, 1995; Whitehead, 1997). Perhaps as a means to recoup masculine strength, to cope with the stress of having low SS and experiencing a fragmented gender self, men with this kind of low respectability may resort to concurrency to build reputational masculine strength. This assertion is consistent with previous research findings (Adimora et al., 2004; Adimora, 2003; Maher et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2011) which associate lower SS with higher levels of concurrency and high risk behaviors.

While a lower level of respectability masculinity, conceptualized as low SS, was associated with a higher odds of engaging in concurrency, the same association was not found when low respectability masculinity was conceptualized as TGNC sexual orientation. In the multivariate logistic regression model, having a TGNC sexual orientation was associated with a decreased odds of concurrency. This relationship is contrary to the hypothesized relationship put forth earlier in this dissertation study. It is also contrary to the results of previous studies (Dyer et al., 2014; Gorbach et al., 2009) which found concurrency to occur at higher levels among TGNC

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men than among TGC men. In particular, the results of this dissertation's analyses diverge from those of a previous study (Adimora et al., 2007) which used the NSFG to examine concurrency among U.S. men. Authors of this study found that the odds of concurrency were higher for those men who had a history of sex with men when compared to those with no such history. The differences in these results may be due in part to how men were classified as TGNC. In the aforementioned study, men were classified and analyzed based solely on their sexual behaviors. In this dissertation, men were classified and analyzed based on their sexual behaviors, identities, and attractions. This method of classification was chosen because a single measure (i.e., behavior) is often insufficient for accurately categorizing individuals' sexual orientation (Igartua, Thombs, Burgos, & Montoro, 2009). Additionally, individual reports of identity, attraction, and behavior are not reliably correlated with one another (Chandra, Copen, & Mosher, 2013). For example, an individual may report a heterosexual identity, but have an attraction to those of the same sex and engage in same-sex behaviors. Therefore, in an attempt to more accurately capture men who may experience masculine role strain from operating outside of heteronormative, traditional definitions of masculinity, the method of classifying men as TGNC whether by attraction, identity, and/or behaviors was used for this current study.

The results of the analyses based on sexual orientation may also indicate that Black TGNC men may appraise their inability to fulfill the traditionally defined role of a TGC male as a benign threat and thus may not experience discrepancy masculine role strain and stress nor strictly rely on concurrency or other behaviors to cope with such strain and stress. The results might also indicate that Black TGNC men experience strain and stress, but identify other resources and aspects of respectability masculinity (e.g., high income, community involvement), relying less heavily on reputational masculinity characteristics, to build an acceptable level of

masculine strength for themselves. One previous study examining Black gay men's manhood/masculinity definitions (Wise, 2001) provides some insight into how Black TGNC may build respectability masculine strength. The men in the study cited strength and responsibility as two primary defining characteristics of manhood. Strength was defined by the men as resilience over, and success in spite of adverse circumstances, such as experiences of homophobia and racism. Responsibility reflected the men belief in the importance of giving back to one's family and community through the provision of financial support, emotional care, and community service (Wise, 2001). These definitions of masculinity are similar to those offered in another study (Hammond & Mattis, 2005) examining manhood definitions among Black men. In that study, family responsibility and economic provision were two central aspects of Black masculinity and manhood cited by the participants. The results of the Wise and Hammond & Mattis studies provide some insight into aspects of respectability masculinity (e.g., family responsibility and community involvement) which TGNC may rely on the build masculine strength. Future HIV prevention interventions could promote and seek to enhance TGC and TGNC Black men's endorsement of these forms of respectability masculinity thereby reducing their reliance on reputational masculinity and subsequently lowering their risk for HIV infection.

The results of analyses examining the association between respectability masculinity based on sexual orientation and concurrency failed to fully support Hypothesis 1-2, where lower respectability was conceptualized as TGNC sexual orientation. This finding implies that TGC men in this sample are at greater concurrency risk than TGNC and that perhaps TGNC sexual risk-taking motivations are not wholly linked to their sexual orientation. However, given previously determined interactions between sexual orientation and other socioeconomic factors and their combined influence on concurrency and HIV risk behaviors, this dissertation further

interrogated these relationships to determine whether the association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency behavior is moderated by respectability masculinity conceptualized as SS. The results of these analyses indicated a significant interaction between Black men's sexual orientation and SS which impacted their odds of concurrency. Specifically, results suggest a greater odds of engaging in concurrency as the level of SS increased. However, the strength of the moderating effect of SS varied by sexual orientation. For TGC men, as their level of respectability masculinity (SS) rose, the negative association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and odds of engaging in concurrency was attenuated with the relationship remaining slightly negative. In contrast, for TGNC men, the negative association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and odds of concurrency was enhanced and the association became positive as the level of the SS moderator increased. The results of the moderation analyses suggest a protective effect of SS for TGC men and an exacerbating effect for TGNC men.

These results are surprising to the author and contrary to the hypothesized relationship posited earlier in this dissertation which expected lower odds of concurrency as men's level of respectability masculinity (SS) increased. For TGC men, the findings from this study could reflect previous research results (Adimora et al., 2013; Senn et al., 2011) which identify sex ratio imbalances as contributing factors to concurrency among Black men. Given that there are fewer Black males in colleges and universities and high-paying jobs—places where those with high SS tend to work and meet—when compared to Black females (Black Women Students, 2006; Holzer, 2015), Black men in those spaces may be more likely engage in concurrency because of decreased competition with other men resulting in the increased availability of potential sexual partners.

For TGNC Black men, as well as for some TGC Black men, higher odds of concurrency as the level of the SS moderator rises, could also reflect their inability to find a compatible partner (e.g., equally as educated and financially stable). This inability might encourage these men to maintain multiple, overlapping sexual relationships, as opposed to committing to a monogamous relationship with one individual. Moreover, being "Big Men" puts TGNC men in smaller, more exclusive networks where they have fewer viable sexual partners and are more likely to engage in concurrency. Thus, instead of experiencing discrepancy masculine role strain because of an inability to fulfill the traditionally-defined masculine role of the financially successful man, they may experience dysfunction masculine role strain where they live up to the traditional role of the hypersexual man by maintaining these multiple, concurrent partnerships and thus putting themselves at greater risk for adverse health (e.g., HIV infection) and social (e.g., dysfunctional romantic/sexual relationships) consequences.

Implications for Future Research and Intervention Activities

Overall, the results of the Aim 1 analyses reinforce the notion that SS and sexual orientation exert an important influence on men's concurrency behavior and should be addressed in future research and interventions focused on concurrency among Black men. The results of the Aim 1 analyses suggest several possible lines of future research and interventions at the individual and social structural levels. At the individual-level, research and interventions could focus on understanding and promoting healthier stress-coping methods among Black men to address the underlying influences of low SS and respectability masculinity. Providing opportunities to become involved in community work (Bharmal et al., 2012), promoting active coping strategies (i.e., using hard work, determination, and one's own resources to contend with stressors) (Schmeelk-Cone, Zimmerman, Abelson, 2003), and encouraging the adoption of mind-

body exercises (e.g., meditation). Religious/spiritual stress management strategies such as prayer are examples of healthier coping mechanisms which are suggested in previous socioeconomic-based stress and coping studies which include Black men among their samples (Bryant, 2008; Chung et al., 2014).

Future research on individual-level factors should also seek to understand what constitutes masculine strength among Black TGNC. Low respectability masculinity was initially hypothesized in this dissertation as TGNC sexual orientation. The results of the direct effects analyses demonstrated that Black TGNC men had lower odds of concurrency compared to their TGC counterparts. These results could indicate that Black TGNC men may perceive their sexual orientation as a factor which diminishes their level of respectability masculinity. However, these men may perceive that their respectability masculinity is comprised of more than just their sexual orientation.

Black TGNC men's lower odds of concurrency also suggests that their sexual orientation is not central to their identity as a (respectable) man and therefore does not diminish their perceptions of their own masculine strength or fragment their masculine selves. These findings could also imply that Black TGNC integrate other aspects of the self to formulate masculine identity enhancing the probability of achieving positive health outcomes. This proposition converges with previous study findings which associated having a positive integrated identity of being both Black and TGNC with higher levels of self-esteem, stronger social support networks, greater levels of life satisfaction, and lower levels of psychological distress than men who do not achieve this positive integrated identity (Crawford et al., 2002; Harper et al., 2004). However, findings from previous studies and explanations posited by this dissertation may not hold true in some circumstances given the plurality of masculinity and the various ways in which it impacts

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men's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Levant, 1996; Rogers et al., 2015). For some Black TGNC men, sexual orientation may be central to their masculine identity or perceived masculine strength, and we might therefore observe different associations between respectability masculinity and concurrency among those men. Given the variations in the ways male roles are enacted in different situations and contexts (Levant, 1996; Rogers et al., 2015), a TGNC orientation may be a more salient characteristic and/or inducer of masculine role strain for some men and not for others. Moreover, for those men who do experience strain, instead of concurrency, they may use other coping strategies (e.g., active coping, exceling academically) to contend with the stress. Further research should work to disentangle and provide clarity on how sexual orientation variously impacts concurrency and leverage those results in interventions targeting the behavior among Black TGNC men.

To ensure that Black men are able to utilize positive coping strategies for addressing socioeconomic stressors typically reinforced by individual-level interventions, future research and interventions at the social structural-level should simultaneously seek to improve access to high quality education, job, and entrepreneurial training opportunities for Black men. Previous public health studies and commentaries (Crawford et al., 2012; Harper, 2007; Matthews, Smith, Brown, & Malebranche, 2016; Williams, 2003; Williams, 1999) have called for the dismantling structural inequalities and race- and sexual-orientation-based stigma and discrimination as a means of improving the sexual health and overall well-being of Black men. These efforts, especially when focused on low SS men, could help to ensure that they have more structural resources to mitigate socioeconomic stress, such as the ability to create and sustain wealth through business ownership. In turn, the increase in SS resulting from these structural resources might provide opportunities for Black men to increase their levels respectability masculinity and

reduce their reliance on reputational masculinity to build masculine strength. Federal, state, and local government policies to provide funding for microfinance programs targeting Black men could help to reduce structural barriers to increasing Black men's SS. Microfinance programs, which provide banking and financial services (e.g., business loans, entrepreneurial training) to typically low-SS individuals, have demonstrated some success in improving the SS and health outcomes of its beneficiaries (Morduch, 1999) Microfinance programs have primarily been implemented among female populations in developing areas such as sub-Saharan Africa (Seely, 2015). However, there is promising evidence that microfinance and other entrepreneurial enterprises can improve the health and social well-being of some Black men in the U.S. (Jennings, Shore, Strohminger, & Allison, 2015; Jennings, 2014). Such activities, which seek to minimize structural barriers to improving one's health and social conditions, could certainly have a positive impact on the beliefs, behaviors, and life circumstances (e.g., low-SS, heavier reliance on reputational masculinity) which are associated with Black men's increased engagement in concurrency.

Additionally, at the social structural-level, it is important to have interventions which socialize men to demonstrate other forms of respectability masculinity, especially when there is lack of access to resources that allow them to build masculine strength through socioeconomic means. These interventions should also encourage men with limited socioeconomic means to rely less heavily on reputational attributes to build masculine strength. These suggestions for interventions mirror recommendations from previous studies examining masculinity's impact on Black men's health behaviors (Aronson et al., 2003; Whitehead, 1997). Masculine transformation, or the re-socializing boys and men to promote healthier, less risky ideologies has been the focus of several investigators (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005;

Dworkin, 2015) and is promoted as a means of reducing HIV risk among men and their sexual partners (Dworkin, Treves-Kagan, & Lippman, 2013; Fleming, Colvin, Peacock, & Dworkin, 2016; Whitehead, 1997). Masculine transformation works by targeting the masculinity norms which exist in the social environments where men exist, particularly those norms that place men's health in peril, and countering these more harmful ideals with more positive images and messages of masculinity via health communications and media campaigns, in-school curricula, and other activities at both the individual- and social structural levels (Dworkin et al., 2013).

There are very few existing masculine transformation HIV-prevention interventions involving Black men. One such program (Freudenberg et al., 2010), which incorporated masculine transformation principles into a curriculum designed to reduce drug use, HIV risk, and recidivism among young Black and Latino men leaving jail did not demonstrate a positive impact on lowering the men's sexual risk behaviors. However, community re-entry is a difficult process for many former prisoners resulting in a number of social problems such as substance abuse, mental health disorders, and low-SS (Offender Reentry, 2016) which may impede their ability to lower their HIV risk and explain this program's lack of demonstrated effectiveness. In another study (Aronson et al., 2013) which incorporated masculine transformation elements into an HIV-prevention curriculum for Black male college students demonstrated significant improvements to men's attitudes toward, skills for, and actual condom use, subsequently reducing their risk for HIV. One additional study which incorporated masculine transformation elements into a curriculum to reduce HIV risk for Black men receiving social services/community clinic care demonstrated statistically significant increases in employment rates and lower HIV risk behaviors (e.g., less unprotected sex) for the participants in the study (Raj et al., 2014). The promising results of these latter studies, the disparate make-up of the

samples in the studies (i.e., recent jail inmates vs. college students vs. social services recipients), and the dearth of studies examining masculine transformation initiatives among Black men suggests that more research and interventions are needed to determine the effectiveness of such initiatives.

Overall, the results of the Aim 1 analyses provide insight and direction for future research and interventions at the individual-level which may reduce Black men's HIV risk behaviors by promoting healthier stress-coping mechanisms and helping individuals to construct healthy forms of masculinity. It also provides insight and direction for research and intervention activities at the social structural level which include dismantling structural barriers to SS-building resources such as high-quality education and job training, and providing more opportunities to access these resources, and re-socializing Black boys and men to endorse healthier form of masculinity. The research and intervention approaches to addressing sexual orientation, SS, and concurrency among Black men may vary from person-to-person or in different contexts. However, it is clear, from the results of this dissertations' analyses and previous research, that a clearer understanding of these factors and an incorporation of them into interventions could positively impact men's concurrency behavior and reduce their HIV risk.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTITATIVE AIM 2 FINDINGS- THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MASCULINITY IDEOLOGIES AND CONCURRENCY

To further explore the factors impacting Black men's concurrency behavior, Aim 2 examined the direct and moderated associations between traditional masculinity ideologies and Black men's engagement in concurrency**.** It was hypothesized that higher endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies would be associated with a greater odds of engaging in concurrency when compared to lower endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies. It was also hypothesized that traditional masculinity ideologies would moderate the association between respectability masculinity (SS and TGNC) and concurrency, such that the association between lower respectability masculinity and greater odds of engaging in concurrency would be stronger for men with higher endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies when compared to men with lower endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies. The following data describes the steps taken to explore Aim 2 and test its hypotheses.

<u>Direct Effect of Traditional Masculinity Ideology (Heteronormativity) on Concurrency</u>

To determine the direct effect of traditional masculinity ideology (heteronormativity) on concurrency, respondents' scores for traditional masculinity ideology (heteronormativity) were calculated by summing their z-scores for the GAYADOPT and SAMESEX items. Z-scores were calculated by setting the means for GAYADOPT and SAMESEX to zero and their standard deviations to one. Table 9 contains the results of models examining the influence of traditional masculinity ideology and demographic characteristics on the odds of engaging in concurrency. In unadjusted analyses, traditional masculinity ideology was significantly and positively associated

with concurrency. In multivariate analyses, this association remained significantly positive with a 1 SD increase in traditional masculinity ideology being significantly associated with a 1.04 greater odds of concurrency (95% CI: 1.04-1.04, p<.0001).

<u>Moderated Effect of Traditional Masculinity Ideology (Heteronormativity) on Concurrency</u>

Traditional Masculinity Ideology, Respectability Masculinity (SS), and Concurrency

Analyses were then conducted to test whether the association between respectability masculinity (SS & TGNC) and concurrency is moderated by traditional masculinity ideology (heteronormativity). First, a term representing the interaction between respectability masculinity (SS) and traditional masculinity ideology was entered into the multivariate logistic regression model. The coefficient of the interaction term was statistically significant (β=0.002, p<.0001) indicating a moderating effect of traditional masculinity ideology on the association between respectability masculinity (SS) and concurrency. The results of the moderation analyses show that for every one standard unit increase in the level of traditional masculinity ideology there is a 0.002 decrease in the multiplicative factor of respectability masculinity (SS), resulting in a lower odds of concurrency.

Table 9: Traditional Masculinity Ideology (Heteronormativity) and Concurrency among Black Men (N=1708)

	Unadjusted Crude Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Model 1 Full Model AOR (95% CI)
Traditional Masculinity Ideology (Heteronormativity)	1.25 (1.25-1.25) ***	1.04 (1.04- 1.04) ***
Age	1.09 (1.09-1.09)***	0.99 (0.99-0.99) ***
Marital Status	0.29 (0.29-0.29)***	0.27 (0.27-0.27)***
Cocaine Use	0.84 (0.83-0.84)***	0.92 (0.91-0.93)***
Crack Use	0.90 (0.90-0.91)***	1.36 (1.34-1.38)***
Crystal Meth Use	0.91 (0.91-0.91)***	3.28 (3.22-3.33)***
Inject Non-Prescription Drugs	0.85 (0.85-0.85)***	0.18 (0.18-0.18)***

***p<.0001 AOR=Adjusted Odds Ratio CI=Confidence Interval

Traditional Masculinity Ideology, Respectability Masculinity (TGNC), and Concurrency

A term representing the interaction between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and traditional masculinity ideology was also entered into a multivariate logistic regression model. The coefficient of the interaction term was statistically significant (β=0.39, p<.0001) indicating a significant moderating effect of traditional masculinity ideology on the association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency. Post-hoc analysis (Figure 11) of the interaction revealed that traditional masculinity ideology (heteronormativity) reversed the association between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency for both TGC and TGNC men. Figure 11 demonstrates that as the level of traditional masculinity ideology (labeled as heteronormativity in Figure 11) rose for TGC men (TGNC=0), the association (odds ratio) between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency changed from negative to positive (AOR=1.02, 95% CI: 1.02-1.03). Similarly, for TGNC men, as their level of traditional masculinity ideology rose, the association (odds ratio) between respectability masculinity (TGNC) and concurrency changed from negative to positive (AOR=1.52, 95% CI: 1.50-1.53).

Figure 11: Interaction Effects of Traditional Masculinity Ideology and Respectability Masculinity (TGNC) on Concurrency
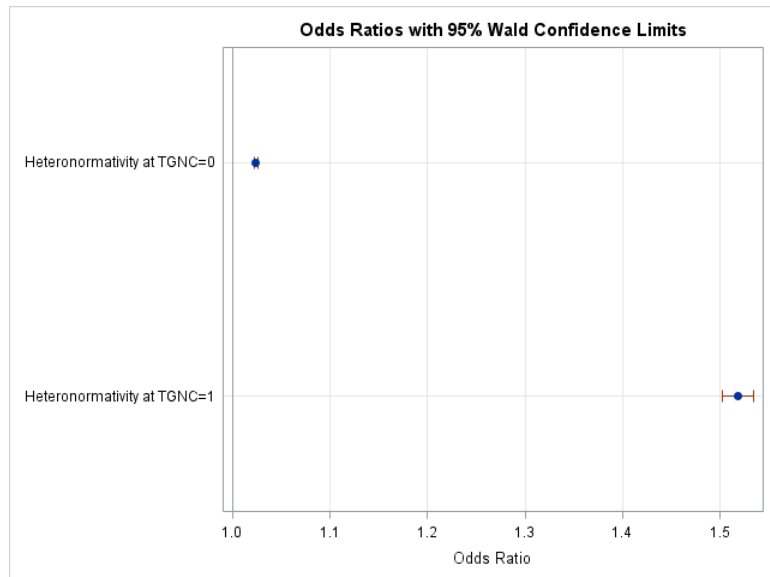
Aim 2 Discussion

The analyses for Aim 2 sought to determine the impact of traditional masculinity ideology on Black men's concurrency behavior. The results of these analyses revealed that traditional masculinity ideology is an important factor influencing Black men's concurrency behavior and should be taken into consideration in future HIV prevention research and health promotion activities targeting this group. As hypothesized, Black men's odds of engaging in concurrency was greater as their level of endorsement of traditional masculinity ideology rose. This is consistent with findings from previous studies which associate higher endorsement of these ideologies with higher rates of concurrency (Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009; Ragnarsson et al., 2010; Reed et al., 2012; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010). Similarly, a previous research study among a racially diverse sample of MSM found that those men who reported high endorsement of normative/traditional masculinity ideologies were more likely to have non-monogamous relationships and sexually permissive relationship agreements (Wheldon & Pathak, 2010).

For both TGC and TGNC men, the results of these analyses could mean that those who highly endorse heteronormative traditional masculinity ideologies might also highly endorse and adhere to other traditional ideologies encouraging risk taking and hypersexuality (i.e., the Give 'Em Hell Archetype). This proposition suggests that the relationship between high endorsement of heteronormativity and greater odds of concurrency may be mediated by other risk-enhancing traditional masculinity ideologies. Regardless of whether the relationship between traditional masculinity ideologies (e.g., heteronormativity) and greater odds of concurrency is direct or mediated, men's endorsement and adherence to these ideologies suggests that they might also

experience dysfunctional masculine strain, which occurs when men's fulfillment of traditional

masculinity ideologies places their health in peril (Pleck, 1995).

For TGNC men, their high endorsement of heteronormative traditional masculinity

ideologies could reflect their inability to commit to a monogamous relationship with another man

because such a relationship is not sanctioned by these traditional ideologies. Previous studies

among individuals in same sex relationships demonstrate the association of internalized

heteronormative and homophobic ideologies and decreased relationship satisfaction (Frost &

Meyer, 2009; Otis, Rostosky, Riggle, & Hamrin, 2006). Moreover, TGNC men's non-

heterosexual orientation may make it difficult for them to achieve relationship satisfaction with

their female romantic and sexual partners. Previous studies which include behaviorally bisexual

men in their sample demonstrate achieving full romantic and sexual satisfaction with only their

female partners (Coleman, 1985; Malcolm, 2000; Zimmerman, 2013). Therefore, concurrency

could serve as a stress-coping mechanism for TGNC men contending with dissatisfaction in

relationships with female partners.

TGNC men may also use concurrency as a stress-coping mechanism to contend with their

feelings of failure for not fulfilling their own and society's traditional ideals around manhood

and masculinity. These suppositions are supported by the literature detailing men's experiences

of discrepancy and trauma masculine role strain (Pleck, 1995). TGNC Black men can experience

discrepancy strain when they do not conform to their internalized masculinity ideologies (i.e.,

TGC)—which often reflect traditional masculinity ideologies and norms (Pleck, 1995). In turn,

TGNC men may utilize hypermasculinity via hypersexuality (i.e., concurrency) to cope with the

stress of discrepancy strain and to prove their manhood to others—despite their sexual

orientation (Courtenay, 2011).

In addition to discrepancy strain, TGNC men, as well as TGC ones, may also experience trauma masculine role strain which impacts their concurrency beliefs and behaviors. Trauma strain is a consequence of the masculine socialization of boys and men to restrict and be out-of-tune with their emotions. It is believed that this emotional restrictiveness among boys and men can result in hypersexual, risk-taking behaviors (Thompson & Pleck, 1995), such as the greater odds of concurrency observed among men in this current dissertation study. Additionally, it is thought that men's emotional restrictiveness can elicit a "defense autonomy" or their aversion to initiating and maintaining close emotional attachments due to the fear of losing those attachments (Burn & Ward, 2005; Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Men's emotional restrictiveness can result in normative male alexithymia, or men's inability to detect others' emotions or put one's own emotions into words (Hoagland & Levant, 2015; Karakis & Levant, 2012). Alexithymia has previously been associated with men's increased relationship dissatisfaction, increased fear of intimacy, and diminished communication quality in relationships (Burn & Ward, 2005; Hoagland & Levant, 2015; Karakis & Levant, 2012)—all factors which may encourage some Black men to use concurrency as a stress-coping mechanism

While most of the hypotheses for Aim 2 were supported, the finding demonstrating that the interaction between respectability masculinity (SS) and traditional masculinity ideology (heteronormativity) decreased the effect of respectability masculinity on the odds of Black men engaging in concurrency was surprising and divergent from the relationship hypothesized in the earlier parts of this dissertation. The relationship between lower levels respectability masculinity and higher engagement in concurrency was hypothesized to be enhanced by men's higher endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies. It was also hypothesized that these men would experience more masculine role strain due to their low-SS and inability to achieve big man status

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via respectability masculinity mechanisms. This strain would purportedly be compounded for those with high level of endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies, including the belief that men should be financially viable (Whitehead, 1997). However, the findings from this dissertation analyses suggests that a different kind of interaction relationship is at play which may impact Black men's concurrency behavior. Perhaps men in the study with lower SS and higher levels of endorsement heteronormative ideologies strongly adhere to traditional family values which promote monogamy (Stacey, 1996). Therefore, while these men may experience masculine role strain due to their low SS, they may choose to honor their traditional family values by resorting to other coping mechanisms or means of building masculine strength that do not include concurrency.

Implications for Future Research and Intervention Activities

The endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies in this dissertation study only reflects men's buy-in to heteronormative ideologies and conformity to the "No Sissy Stuff" traditional masculine archetype. Those men who highly endorse heteronormative masculinity ideologies may also highly endorse other forms of traditional masculinity ideologies, such as risk-taking and hypersexuality (i.e., dysfunctional masculine role strain), resulting in their greater odds of engaging in concurrency (Pleck, 1995). Future research should explore other traditional masculinity archetypes (e.g., Sturdy Oak and Give 'Em Hell) and ideologies to determine their direct and interactive effect on Black men's concurrency behavior and HIV risk. (Brannon & David, 1976). Future research should also further explore the interaction between SS and heteronormative traditional masculinity ideologies, and the subsequent decrease of odds in concurrency observed in this dissertation's analyses. It should also examine additional forms of traditional masculinity ideologies (e.g., risk-taking, emphasis on providership), how they interact

with SS, and whether these interactions impact Black men's concurrency behavior and HIV risk. Identifying other masculinity archetypes and ideologies impacting Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors could provide information which can be leveraged for enhanced HIV prevention strategies for Black men. Such strategies might include the promotion of healthier forms of masculinity that strengthen identity but do not increase their HIV risk. Simultaneously, these prevention strategies could work to dissuade Black men from engaging in other forms of masculinity expression (e.g., hypersexuality) which increase their odds of engaging in concurrency and place them at greater risk for HIV infection.

While future research will help to further explicate how various masculinities impact Black men's engagement in concurrency and how to leverage that information for effective HIV prevention strategies, the results of this dissertation's quantitative analyses provide several directions for interventions, as well as additional lines of research inquiry. Previous studies examining the influence of masculinity on HIV risk have demonstrated that gender-transformative work, which seeks to promote gender-equality and shift gender norms from those which place the health of men and their partners at peril to those which protect their health, can work to reduce HIV risk behaviors (Dworkin et al., 2013; Fleming et al., 2016). However, more research is needed to understand the long-term impact of gender-transformative work on HIV disparities among all men and specifically among Black men.

In addition to gender-transformative work promoting the adoption of more positive masculinity ideologies, HIV prevention activities for Black men should also promote their adoption of healthier stress-coping mechanisms. It is important to note the need for social structural-level interventions (e.g., improving public school funding, anti-racism programs) to improve access to resources--such as high-quality schools and stable, well-paying employment--

which are necessary for increasing one's SS. However, interventions at the social structural-level can be more resource-intensive and require a longer amount of time to affect change and improve health outcomes than individual-level interventions (McGinnis, Williams-Russo, & Knickman, 2002). Given the pressing need to reduce Black men's HIV risk, interventions promoting healthy stress-coping mechanisms can have a more immediate impact on Black men's HIV risk. By promoting mind-body exercises like meditation and the use of religion/spirituality, which have been cited in previous studies (Bryant, 2008; Chung et el., 2014) as destressing methods used by Black men, and volunteering in the community (as suggested by Bharmal et al., 2012) as an alternative means of building respectability masculine strength, HIV prevention interventions targeting Black men may help them to find and utilize healthier stress-coping mechanisms which improve rather than diminish the men's overall health and well-being. Finally, HIV prevention activities targeting Black men, especially Black TGNC men, should work to help the men to positively integrate their various social identities. Such a positively-integrated social identity can lead Black TGNC men toward a more positive psychological well-being (Crawford et al., 2002; Harper et al., 2004), which in turn can reduce their HIV risk behaviors (Lynch et al., 2010), including a decline in concurrency engagement.

<u>Limitations</u>

These quantitative findings from analyses addressing Aims 1 and 2 should be considered in light of the following limitations. One limitation of this dissertation lies in its inability to determine the extent to which concurrency occurs among men who only have sex with men or men with multiple, concurrent male sexual partners. The NSFG does not collect information on the date of first and last sex with respondents' male sexual partners. A classification of engagement in concurrency is made only if a respondent reports ever having had oral or anal sex

with a man, (2) having at least one male sexual partner during the past 12 months, and having

had a heterosexual partnership that lasted the entire 12 months prior to participation in the study.

Therefore, a classification of concurrency is contingent upon the respondents having sex with

women which may lead to an underestimation of the men's engagement in the behavior.

Another limitation is the cross-sectional design of the NSFG. This type of design presents

the possibility of recall error for a number of measures in the study. Most importantly, because

the classification of participants' engagement in concurrency was made using their self-reported

first and last dates of sex with their sexual partners, there is the potential that participants will be

misclassified as being non-sexually-concurrent (or sexually-concurrent) based upon these errors

in date recall. The cross-sectional study design also limits this dissertation ability to establish

temporality and causality among the variables of study, including whether low respectability

preceded engagement in concurrency or was the cause of men's engagement in the behavior.

The measures to assess respectability masculinity and the index of traditional masculinity

ideology used in this dissertation have not been previously used or validated. The constraints of

this dissertation do not permit for repeated testing of the measure and index to determine their

validity (i.e., accurate measurements of masculine strength and traditional masculinity ideology).

This limitation creates the possibility of incorrectly associating men's concurrency behaviors

with their masculine strength and traditional masculinity ideologies, when in fact other factors

may be more accurately correlated to these behaviors. While these measurement errors are

possible, the results from the exploratory factor analysis conducted for this dissertation suggest

that the scale developed for this study had good internal consistency among the items comprising

it. Future studies should seek to validate this measure in other samples of Black men." Future

research using the respectability masculinity and traditional masculinity ideology measures used in this dissertation should work to validate them.

Strengths

Despite these limitations, the quantitative study has several strengths. The large, nationally representative dataset (NSFG) utilized allows for some generalizations to be made about the concurrency behavior of Black men across the United States. The large number of respondents in the dataset's sample created high statistical power, which increased the likelihood of detecting associations between SS, sexual orientation, traditional masculinity ideologies, and concurrency for Black TGC and TGNC men. Another strength of these quantitative analyses is the strong, comprehensive theoretical foundations which formed the bases for this dissertation's analyses and interpretations. This theoretical foundation and the results of these quantitative analyses help to chart a path toward addition lines of research inquiry to better determine the influence of various masculinities (e.g., SS and sexual orientation-based forms) on men's concurrency behaviors and their risk for HIV.

The exploration of various factors impacting concurrency is another strength of this study. The expansive examination of the influence of masculinities, SS, and stress-coping on concurrency offered several points for future research and intervention which may positively impact HIV prevention efforts for Black TGC and TGNC men. Very few previous studies have examined these factors and their individual and collective influence of concurrency. Therefore, the contributions of this quantitative help to provide a road map for other researchers and interventionists who seek to further enhance public health's understanding of Black men's HIV risk behaviors and prevention needs.

<u>Quantitative Study Conclusions</u>

The results of the quantitative analyses of this dissertation demonstrate the importance of considering how masculinities shape and are shaped by SS, sexual orientation, traditional masculinity ideologies, such as heteronormativity, when conducting HIV prevention research and interventions targeting Black men. Masculinities are complex and impact men's behaviors in a varied ways, as evidenced by the variations in direct and indirect effects observed in this dissertation's quantitative analyses and results. For example, the direct analyses models results demonstrating TGNC having lower odds of concurrency than TGC men, while simultaneously having greater odds of concurrency in moderation analyses models where sexual orientation interacted with other sociodemographics characteristics demonstrates the importance of considering the collective impact of these factors on concurrency. Future research should continue to explore how masculinities and related factors impact Black men's concurrency behavior. Such future research should include examinations of both the individual- and structural-level factors which shape masculinities, inform Black men's concurrency behavior, and impact their risk for HIV infection. Future HIV prevention interventions based on this future research should also take into account the differential impact of factors like sexual orientation on concurrency in order to tailor interventions to the unique needs of Black men across the identity spectrum.

CHAPTER 6: QUALITATIVE AIM 1 FINDINGS- THE INFLUENCE OF MASCULINITY IDEOLOGIES, MASCULINITY NORMS, PERSONAL VALUES, AND MASCULINE ROLE STRAIN ON BLACK MEN'S RELATIONSHIP DISSATISFACTION, STRESS-COPING BEHAVIORS, AND ENGAGEMENT IN CONCURRENCY

The qualitative section of this dissertation sought to expand the quantitative findings by further explicating individual- and social structural-level factors impacting Black men's engagement in concurrency. The goals of the qualitative study were to examine the ways in which Black men describe concurrency and the reasons cited for and against engaging in the behavior. To accomplish this goal, focus group data was analyzed to explore Black men's views of engagement in concurrency and their impressions of how this behavior might be impacted by masculinity ideologies, the strains produced by relationship dissatisfaction, and other stress-coping processes employed by the men.

Sample Demographics

Focus group data from the Concurrency Media Study was used to conduct the qualitative analyses for this dissertation. The study consisted of three focus groups held with 28 Black male participants residing in two Eastern North Carolina counties. Men in the focus group ranged in age from 18-32 years. 20 of the 28 participants reported having never been married. Three of the 28 participants reported not being in school or currently employed. The majority of the men had obtained at least a high school diploma/GED and slightly more than half had an annual household income that fell at or below $19,999. Table 10 contains an overview of the focus groups participants' demographics.

Table 10: Concurrency Media Study Focus Groups Participants' Demographics

Demographics	Mean (range) or n (%)
Age	26.6 years (18-32)
Marital Status	
Never Married	20 (71.4%)
Living with Partner	4 (14.3%)
Separated	1 (3.6%)
Divorced	1 (3.6%)
Did Not Respond	2 (7.1%)
Annual Household Income	
Less than $5,000	7 (25%)
$5,000 to less than $20,000	8 (28.6%)
$20,000 to less than $40,000	6 (21.4%)
$40,000 to less than $60,000	3 (10.7%)
$80,000+	1 (3.6%)
Did Not Respond	3 (10.7%)
Education Level	
Some High School	6 (21.4%)
High School/GED	12 (42.9%)
Some College	10 (35.7%)
Employment Status	
Full-Time	8 (28.6%)
Part-Time	1 (3.6%)
In-School	14 (50%)
In-School and Employed Part-Time	1 (3.6%)
Homemaker	2 (7.1%)
In-School and Homemaker	1 (3.6%)
Unable to Work	1 (3.6%)

Concurrency Descriptors

The moderator of the three focus groups asked the men a series of questions designed to gain insights about how sexual concurrency is discussed and understood in their communities. These questions included:

1. "When I say the words 'overlapping sexual partnerships,' what does that mean to you?
2. What does the phrase 'messin' around' mean to you?
3. How do your friends talk about having overlapping sexual partnerships/messin' around?"
4. "How common is it for your friends to have sex with another woman while they're in a relationship (i.e. having sex with more than one woman at the same time?"

5. "Would men in your community consider this cheating? Why? Why not?"

The entire list of focus group questions is provided in Appendix B. There was both discord and congruence in how the men in the focus groups described concurrency. Some similar words used across the focus groups to describe concurrency include cheating, nature, and life or enjoying life. In total, the men used twenty-two different words and phrases to describe concurrency (Table 11).

Table 11: Words and Phrases to Describe Concurrency

Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3
• Affairs • Cheating • Juggling (women) • Messing around • Mingling • Overlapping	• Addiction • Cheating • Enjoying life • Friends with benefits • Getting caught up • Having fun • Life • More than one partner • Multiple • Nature • Too many • Whole lot	• Cheating • Competition • Conversation • Getting what you do • Life • Nature • Not cheating

Some of the words and phrases (e.g., messing around, overlapping) used by the men to describe concurrency reflected the wording of the questions posed by the moderator. However, many of the other words used by the men reflected their own perceptions and descriptions of maintaining multiple overlapping sexual partnerships. "Cheating" was the only word or phrase used by the men in all three focus groups to describe the act of concurrency. When asked by the moderator if there was a better way to describe "overlapping sexual partnerships," one participant in the first focus group offered the following:

MOD: How about you, [Identifier-Name]? What are some other ways or better ways of describing [Concurrency]?
M: Basically whoever in the relationship just cheating.
MOD: Just cheating?
M: Yeah.
(Focus Group 1: Males Ages 18-24 years)

The term cheating was understood among the majority of men in the focus groups as an accurate way of describing concurrency. However, not all men considered concurrency to be cheating. For one participant in Focus Group 3, concurrency only constituted cheating if the man engaged in the behavior is in a committed relationship. This opinion was shared by men in both of the other focus groups. Another participant in Focus Group 3 did not consider concurrency in the context of a committed relationship to be cheating and believed that it was only if the person is married. While cheating seemed to have an almost universal understanding among the men in the focus groups and most agreed that it was an appropriate term to describe concurrency, other terms used by the men (e.g., mingling, getting caught up) were not as universal and perhaps had a more personal meaning to the men who offered them.

In addition to cheating, "nature" was another term frequently used by men in the focus groups to describe concurrency. Men in both of the 25-34 year-old focus groups reinforced the description of concurrency as 'natural' human behavior. While discussing possible media-based health promotion interventions targeting concurrency, one participant in Focus Group 3 offered the following:

M: This goes back to beginning of time. People have always had multiple partners.
M: Can't change –
M: It's their nature, it's a human thing. If I had sharp teeth and claws you not going to tell me I can't be with no one. That's what lions do. Lions go over and –
M: Yep.
M: So actually, it's in that person. It's going to be in that person. You can talk all day about you need to be with this one person, but it's just –
M: It's done.

M: – it's nature.

M: If you got the option, what you going to do? If I have one woman or I could have five, what am I going to do? I'm going to be with the five. Because I got that option.

M: – every day for the rest of my life, no I'm going to change.

M: No way, because that's a good slogan right there.

M: That's what it is. It's never going to change. I mean you can try to make a commercial that's going to be good, but I think –

(Focus Group 3: Males Ages 25-34 years)

This participant's belief that concurrency is natural and an inevitable human behavior was shared by other men in all three focus groups. However, not all men in the focus groups endorsed this belief or viewed it as an accurate way to describe concurrency, instead opting to use words like "cheating" to describe the behavior.

Individual Reasons for and Facilitators of Concurrency

While full congruence among focus group participants about concurrency descriptions was not achieved, there was a high level of agreement among them about the primary reason men engage in concurrency. Relationship dissatisfaction or perceived discontent about the lack of fulfillment of various romantic, sexual, emotional, and financial needs was the most commonly cited reasons for men engaging in concurrency. The following exchange between the moderator and highlights the role that relationship dissatisfaction plays in some Black men's concurrency:

MOD: Well, let me ask you this – well, I'll ask this first. What are some reasons men have sex with another women while they're in a relationship?

M: Pleasure.

M: Pleasure.

M: It's what you want.

MOD: Pleasure. I want to give pleasure, why are they stepping out?

M: Pleasure or something that your lady ain't doing at home and –

MOD: It's something your lady's not doing at home, so they –

M: It's plentiful.

MOD: What?

M: Pleasure.

M: All sex ain't the same.

(Focus Group 3: Males Ages 25-34 years)

The men in the focus groups explained that relationship dissatisfaction and engaging in concurrency to cope with the dissatisfaction occurred for one of three primary reasons: (1) the alternative partner provides sexual pleasure/performs sexual acts that the man's primary partner does not; (2) the man and his primary partner have a falling out/disagreement; or (3) the man has grown tired of the familiarity of the (sexual) relationship with his primary partner.

In addition to men's dissatisfaction with the romantic and sexual quality of their relationships, other individual-level factors cited by the men in the focus groups as facilitators of men's engagement in concurrency include enjoyment, age, sexual addiction, being emotionally hurt in a previous relationship, and bragging rights. Younger age was cited in all three focus groups as a reason for men engaging in concurrency. Discussions from each of the focus groups reflected the belief that younger men tend to maintain a higher number of current sexual partners and are more likely to engage in concurrency. A number of men in the focus groups reported that as men aged, they were more likely to "settle down," desire romantic relationships, and refrain from concurrency. However, not all participants agreed that an increase in age equated to a decrease in concurrency behavior. Maturity was also cited as a factor in men's decision to commit to a relationship and refrain from concurrency.

M: I'm going to say maturity because you can be the youngest thing in your mind, right, and not cheat.

M: I know some old heads who still think they young.

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M: Yeah.

M: They want to get out here and dress young, sag their pants, it's all drop back down to maturity.

(Focus Group 1: Males Ages 18-24 years)

While there was not unanimous agreement on the influence of younger chronological age on

concurrency behavior, men in each of the three focus mentioned this factor as key determinant.

Other individual-level factors cited by the men as having an impact on concurrency behavior are

contained in Table 12 along with quotes illustrating their influence on men's concurrency

behaviors.

Table 12: Individual Reasons for and Facilitators of Men's Concurrency

Reason Cited for Concurrency	Illustrative Quotation
Enjoyment	*MOD: When I say the words overlapping sexual partnerships, what does that mean to you?* *M: Don't get caught.* *M: Cheating.* *M: Nature.* *MOD: Cheating?* *M: Cheating.* *M: Nature.* *M: Enjoying life.* *M: Getting what you do.* *[Laughter]* **(Focus Group 3: Males Ages 25-34 years)**
Hurt from Previous Relationship	*M: It can have something to do with a prior relationship, anything, you know what I'm saying? You could have got hurt in your last relationship and just said, "Forget it. I'm just dealing with different girls, ain't trying to get attached to no girl, so I'm going to deal here and here and here." That's why I won't catch feelings for her, her, or her. Because I have limited time I might deal with her one day, her the next day.*

Addiction	**M:** *It can be an addiction, man, people having problems like people addicted to cigarettes and everything else; sex could be the same thing. For some people, it's easier to just say, "I'm through with it," and for some people, you got to just be with two and three different people.* **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**
Bragging Rights/Competition	**MOD:** *How do your friends talk about overlapping sexual partnerships? Like messing around?* **M:** *Like competition.* **MOD:** *Like competition?* **M:** *Yeah.* **M:** *It's a conversation.* **M:** *Yeah.* **M:** *It's a conversation. I mean, you know, it's a lot to talk about, but I mean when a bunch of guys get together, that's a part of the conversation.* **MOD:** *How is that part of the conversation?* **M:** *Well you got to see who done hit what.* **M:** *And how it was.* **(Focus Group 3: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

The factors discussed in Table 12 and the preceding text demonstrate that a number of circumstances influence men's concurrency. In addition to those discussed above, the focus group narrative suggests that men's emotion restriction or suppression is another individual-level factor contributing to engagement in concurrency. When discussing the different types of sexual relationships that men have with women, the moderator and a participant in Focus Group 2 had the following exchange:

> **MOD:** *All right. So another girl might just be someone that you're just going to get some [sex]?*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **MOD:** *Now, the girl that you care about, do you have a relationship with her? Is she your girlfriend?*

M: Nah.
M: Nah.
M: No commitment.
MOD: No commitment?
*M: I mean, some – you might hold back. You might hold back. You might not want to
tell her how you feel about her. She might not be on the same page.*
M: Yeah, yeah. Have that wall up.
*M: Exactly. So you don't want to just throw it out there and she reject it. Like, "No,
that ain't what I want.*
M: Yeah.
(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)

The participant's discussion of refraining from expressing his romantic feelings for a female

partner because of fear of rejection demonstrates how men's emotion restriction could prevent

them from forming intimate and non-concurrent romantic and sexual relationships.

In addition to preventing some men from expressing their romantic feelings, emotion

restriction may also contribute to men's relationship dissatisfaction by limiting their willingness

to verbalize disagreements with their partners for fear of a negative reaction. One participant

discussed this phenomenon in the following text:

> *MOD: How about you, [Identifier-Name], what are the relationship issues?*
> *M: Mental and emotional instability. It's like in a woman, she got to feel a certain way
> one moment and then she feel another way. And it's like you don't know how to
> counteract her and how to approach her because you don't want to start an argument or
> you don't want the words to be said. So you got to bite your tongue sometime even
> though you don't want to just to appease her at a certain time.*
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

The perception this participant expressed of relationship issues between men and women being

caused by women's propensity towards being highly emotional and easily angered is one that

was also expressed in Focus Group 1. For some men, not expressing their wants, needs, and

desires in a relationship for fear of rejection—in this instance disagreement and anger from a

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female partner—can contribute to their relationship dissatisfaction and subsequent decision to engage in concurrency.

<div align="center">Structural Reasons for and Facilitators of Concurrency</div>

Men's emotion restriction represents another individual-level influence on men's concurrency behaviors. In addition to this individual-level factor, men in the focus groups described sociocultural factors impacting and facilitating concurrency. One of the most prominently described structural factors is the perceived high prevalence of concurrency in the men's communities of residence and social norms which are supportive of the behavior. Virtually all of the men in each of the focus groups, when asked how prevalent concurrency was among their male peers and community members involved in romantic relationships, responded by stating that at least half of individuals in their communities were engaged in concurrency, as reflected by the following conversation:

> ***MOD:*** *Now think of three of your friends who are all black men about your age who are in a relationship with a woman. It doesn't have to be your best friend, doesn't have to be – you know what I mean? Three friends, three guys that you know well enough. How common is it for your friends to have sex with another woman while they are in a relationship? For example, having sex with more than one woman at the same time, how common is it?*
> ***M:*** *Very.*
> ***M:*** *Very common*
> ***MOD:*** *Out of those three friends would you say zero, one, one out of the three, two out of the three, three out of the three? What would you say?*
> ***M:*** *Three out of three.*
> ***M:*** *Three.*
> ***M:*** *Three out of three.*
> ***M:*** *Three.*
> ***M:*** *Three out of three.*
> ***M:*** *Three out of three of my boys having sex with more than one.*
> ***M:*** *My parents have been married for 40 some odd years, I still dropped my dad off at the other woman's house. Some people might think that wrong, but I feel like this, out of the year's I've known him, I've never seen chase a woman, call my mom by the name, never put a hands on her, everything she's asked, for he's end up getting it]. So I feel like-*
> ***M:*** *That's what it is.*

M: *Cheating keep relationships together, bro.*
(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)

In addition to concurrency being seen as the norm, some men described feeling that this norm was widely accepted and unchallenged by others in the community. This lack of challenge implied broader community acceptance of concurrency. The men's discussions about concurrency suggests that community and familial modeling play a critical role in sustaining concurrency attitudes, behavior, and norms. The men also reported seeing concurrency depicted in media portrayals of relationships between Black men and women. One participant offered the following observation when asked what in the community supports concurrency and makes the behavior possible:

> *M:* *It go to TV, radio and all that.*
>
> *MODF:* *How so?*
>
> *M:* *Especially Michael Baisden.*
>
> *M:* *Yes, sir.*
>
> *MOD:* *What did you say?*
>
> *M: Michael Baisden [A popular nationally-broadcasted Black radio show].*
>
> *MODF:* *Michael Baisden.*
>
> *M:* *Yeah, I listen to him.*
>
> *MODF:* *How so?*
>
> *M:* *I mean it's TV and radio very influential. I mean the same thing with alcohol. Get a drink, listen to the radio and be like, "Word yeah, that's what I want to do tonight. I'm going to the club, I'm going to find me somebody regardless of what she be doing. She going to be at home sleeping, she'll never know." If the issue present itself and you feel like it, then 9 times out of 10 you going to do it.*
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

The high consumption of these media portrayals of by their community members appear to contribute to some of men's beliefs that concurrency is a naturally occurring and unalterable behavior.

> *M: More or less it's like from the beginning of time, man, stuff like that's [concurrency] been happening, so it's basically like carry on from generation to generation basically more or less – you can call it like an epidemic, really, because people are going to be people, man.*
>
> *M: Yeah.*
>
> *M: Regardless.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

Adding to familial, community, and media modeling of concurrency, multiple venues facilitating opportunities for men to engage in concurrency appear to have an impact on men's likelihood of engaging in the behavior. Nightclubs and bars were cited by men in each of the focus groups as venues that facilitate meetings between men and their concurrent sexual partners.

> *M: You can meet a lot of women at clubs if you ain't there with your mate. It's going down at clubs.*
>
> *MODF: So one thing is the clubs.*
>
> *M: The social environment probably.*
>
> *M: Clubs.*
>
> *M: It could be anywhere. It's all about the timing.*
>
> *M: Step on the porch, somebody might ride by.*
>
> *M: It might be the mail lady. You know, you going to the box out there, y'all start with a "hey, how you doing" lead to a conversation.*
>
> *M: You can be at the most positive place. You can go to the YMCA and go cheat.*
>
> **(Focus Group 1: Males Ages 18-24 years)**

While venues like nightclubs and bars may make it easier for men to find partners to engage in concurrency, as the quotes above and below highlight, some men may engage in concurrency whenever the opportunity presents itself. One participants described this phenomenon in the following exchange:

> *M: Yeah. Because I say because the opportunity presents itself.*
>
> *M: Nature. We humans, man.*
>
> *M: If a male – 9 times out of 10, if a male is approached by a female or if a male gets the word that a female likes him or want to do something with him, I mean 9 times out of 10, he's going to pursue it.*
>
> *MOD: How frequently do women approach men though?*
>
> *M: Every day.*
>
> *MOD: Every day? Every day?*
>
> *MOD: Seriously, every day? Do you think women approach –?*
>
> *M: Every day.*
>
> *MOD: Now, will a woman approach a man knowing that he has a woman?*
>
> *M: Yeah. Especially.*
>
> *MOD: Especially?*
>
> *M: That's when they want you the most.*
>
> *M: Yeah.*
>
> *M: Yeah.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

In addition to women approaching men, other opportunities in the social structural environment which were cited by men as facilitators of their concurrency behavior include social media sites like Facebook which provides "free advertising," as described by some of the men in Focus Group 3, and makes it easier for men in relationships to meet potential sexual partners to engage in concurrency.

The ratio of men to women, with women outnumbering men, was also cited as a reason some men engage in concurrency. When asked what factors in the community make it easier for men to engage in concurrency, one participant engaged in the following exchange with a female moderator:

> *MODF: Stuff about in the environment [which makes it easier to engage in concurrency]. You did talk about some of these, you talked about TV, radio.*
>
> *M: Yeah, I got you.*
>
> *MODF: Anything else? That's what –*
>
> *M: There's five women to one men out here in [Identifier-City Name], same thing.*
>
> *MODF: Has that made this more likely to happen?*
>
> *M: Yes it is.*
>
> *M: The ratio [of men to women]?*
>
> *MODF: Mm-hmm.*
>
> *M: That plays a big part of it. I mean I would say so, because if I look down the street I see five girls over there, I look over here I see three guys over here but only one woman walk, I'm thinking, hey. In your mind, if you're not born in knowledge, your self-respect for yourself, you're going to see what you can benefit from these women. I mean 9 times out of 10, a man is – I know that I will. I mean I speak for myself I can't going to speak for nobody else.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

The men in the focus groups demonstrated that a number of social structural factors facilitate some Black men's engagement in concurrency.

<u>Individual Reasons against Concurrency</u>

While the Black men in the focus groups discussed a number of factors influencing and facilitating men's engagement in concurrency, they also offered reasons why men would not engage in the behavior. Respecting oneself and protecting one's health were named by the men as reasons for refraining from engaging in concurrency. When asked by the moderator why some

men would not engage in concurrency, one respondent in Focus Group 1 responded, "Diseases."

The fear of contracting HIV or another STI was cited as reason enough for some men to resist

engaging in the behavior. Another participant in Focus Group 3 offered the following when the

moderator asked about how the men have changed in regards to relationships and concurrency as

they have aged:

> **M:** *Respecting myself.*
>
> **M:** *Love myself first.*
>
> **M:** *It's about a self-thing and I care about my health, and beside me smoking cigarettes, but dealing with the jump off, and all that, you got to wrap it up, but pleasure is pleasure. You can't get it at home, if you can't get it at home, you going to go elsewhere to get it.*
>
> **M:** *Mm-hmm.*
>
> **M:** *That's it.*

This participant, while expressing self-respect as a reason to refrain from concurrency,

subsequently asserted that there are sufficient reasons (e.g., pleasure seeking) to continue to

engage in the behavior. Another participant in Focus Group 2 countered this assessment with the

following:

> **M:** *Me myself, I got two kids now so it's totally new ballgame. Now, you can't just go there in this bed and then come home and be with your kids. It's no telling what you going give to them, so you got to protect them also. So I'm looking at a totally different, I don't care how good you look, baby, you've got to have. I don't care what your face look like, how good you smell at this moment, I could go to your house and see diapers and stuff and all that, it's a new ballgame because I've got kids now. Not only myself. I got to look out for them. I don't bring women around them because I don't want them to see that situation and think daddy do it, it's cool for me to do it. So I got to separate that.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

This exchange between the men in Focus Group 3 demonstrates that protecting one's health and respecting one's self are viewed as important reasons to refrain from engaging in concurrency. However, for some men, the need to cope with the stress of relationship dissatisfaction via concurrency engagement may override their health concerns or ability to strictly adhere to their personal values.

For some men, protecting the health and well-being of their children, as well as being a positive role model for them were additional reasons cited for not engaging in concurrency. Additionally, relationship satisfaction was highly suggested as a reason why men would not engage in the behavior.

> *MOD: What do you think, [Identifier-Name], why would a man not mess around outside his relationship?*
>
> *M: I guess he not being selfish.*
>
> *MOD: He's not being selfish?*
>
> *M: Not being selfish, having consideration for his partner.*
>
> *M: I agree 100% with what he said, 100%. Everything –*
>
> *MOD: Which parts?*
>
> *M: Everything he said. If you were the person and y'all share a special bond and she have everything you need far as like the love, the – I mean –*
>
> *M: Trust.*
>
> *M: – everything. Like, it's there; you know what I'm saying? She the type of woman you want to be with. Because that counts a lot, too. You ain't going to be with nobody that you really don't want to be with. You got to want to be with the person. You got to have respect for the person. You got to love the person. Not being selfish.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

It was not surprising that relationship satisfaction would be cited as a reason against concurrency given that relationships dissatisfaction was cited as a main driver of concurrency among men. The focus group conversations demonstrate that Black men's relationship dissatisfaction, stress-

coping behaviors, and their beliefs about and engagement in concurrency are impacted by various individual- and social structural-level factors such as masculinity ideologies and masculinity norms, masculine role strain, and personal values.

<center>Influence of Personal Values on Concurrency</center>

In discussing factors impacting concurrency behaviors, the participants highlighted that personal values for some men are a sufficient reason to refrain from concurrency engagement. Personal values for the purpose of this dissertation study reflect men's romantic desires, desire to provide economically, and beliefs about the immorality of concurrency. Loving one's partner, selflessness, desiring not to hurt one's partner, and having a personal faith or belief system which discourages concurrency were all cited by men across the three focus groups as additional reasons why men to refrain from concurrency. The focus group participants also cited their self-respect and faith/belief system as reasons against engaging. These personal values reflect the belief that concurrency is viewed, at least by some men, as a negative behavior. Furthermore, some men appeared to view concurrency as a betrayal of broader relationship values. When asked why someone would not engage in concurrency, one participant in Focus Group 2 stated, "You don't want to hurt the other person or like, call it quote-unquote, sell them out. It's like a betrayal." The characterization of concurrency as a betrayal further supports the assertion that men's personal values, more specifically their opinions about its immorality, impact their concurrency beliefs and behaviors.

<center>Influence of Masculinities on Concurrency</center>

In addition to personal values, beliefs about masculinities also appeared to influence concurrency beliefs and behaviors of men in the focus groups. The plurality of masculinity and

the various ways male roles are enacted described in previous research (Hammond & Mattis, 2005; Levant, 1996; Rogers et al., 2015) were supported as drivers of concurrency by the focus group discussions. The driving influence of two concepts introduced in Whitehead's (1997) Big Man Little Man Complex Framework, respectability and reputational masculinity, was also supported by participants. The role of reputational masculinity or men's procurement of masculine strength by engaging in behaviors to gain elevated social status among their peers, was prominently reflected in men's discussions. For example, concurrency was described in the focus groups as a competition among male friends. Some of the men also indicated that concurrency was glorified in their communities and afforded bragging rights to male peers who engaged in the behavior. Concurrency was further reported to increase some men's perceptions of their own manhood. These views reinforce previous research findings (Dworkin et al., 2009; Frye et al., 2012; Macauda et al., 2011; Senn et al., 2011; Whitehead, 1997) which show that concurrency is viewed by some men as an effective method for building masculine strength.

While reputational masculinity characteristics were reported as reasons for men's engagement in concurrency, respectability masculinity characteristics were cited as reasons for men not engaging in concurrency. Protecting one's own health, having respect for self, and protecting and being a positive role model for one's own children were some of the factors cited by the men as reasons for refraining from concurrency. These factors have previously been cited as important components of Black men's constructions of masculinity and reflect the relational nature of Black male constructions of masculine strength (Griffith, Brinkley-Rubinstein, Bruce, Thorpe Jr, & Metzl, 2015; Hammond & Mattis, 2005). They also reflect behaviors which would garner these men respect from other individuals in their communities (Whitehead, 1997; Whitehead et al., 1994). The findings from the focus group lend support to Whitehead's (1997)

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assertion that respectability and reputation are two important concepts comprising Black men's construction of their masculinity. Both forms of masculinity were identified as exerting influences on men's choices to engage in concurrency or not.

<center>Influence of Masculine Role Strain on Concurrency</center>

Concurrency as Dysfunction Strain

In addition to respectability and reputational mechanisms, the men in the focus groups also provided dialogue which demonstrated how masculine role strain might also impact men's concurrency behaviors. The three types of masculine role strain (Dysfunction Strain, Discrepancy Strain, and Trauma Strain) identified by Pleck (1995) emerged as drivers in the ways men in the focus groups thought about, discussed, and engaged in concurrency. In the focus groups, dysfunction strain, which occurs when men conform to (traditional) masculinity ideologies resulting in behaviors which have negative health and social consequences (Thompson & Pleck, 1995), was the primary type of masculine role strain described as impacting men's concurrency-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Throughout the focus group with 25-34 year-olds, the term 'nature' was used to describe concurrency participant beliefs that concurrency was a natural process for men. The belief that concurrency is an expected male behavior appeared to compel some men to engage in the behavior despite expressed knowledge of the health risks associated with the behavior. It is worth noting that the men in the focus group with 18-24 year-olds did not use the term nature to describe concurrency nor did they depict it as a natural process for men. This finding suggests that concurrency can also be viewed as dysfunction strain.

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Men's description of concurrency as "enjoying life" or a behavior some men engage in for the excitement also reflect the risk-taking characteristic of the "Give 'Em Hell" traditional masculine archetype (Brannon & David, 1976). Hypersexual behaviors (i.e., concurrency) are considered one of the trademarks of men's endorsement of this specific archetype. Thus, some of men's willingness to engage in concurrency for excitement and enjoyment, despite the risks to their health (e.g., increased risk for HIV and other STIs) and romantic relationships (e.g., betraying partner's trust) suggests that endorsement of the "Give 'Em Hell" archetype is a catalyst for dysfunction masculine role strain (Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Pleck, 1995).

Concurrency as Trauma Strain

Hypersexuality via concurrency may also reflect men's experiences of trauma masculine role strain. Trauma strain, or men's emotional restrictiveness can elicit defense autonomy or their aversion to initiating and maintaining close emotional attachments due to the fear of losing those attachments (Burn & Ward, 2005; Thompson & Pleck, 1995). Perhaps for some men, engaging in concurrency and betraying the trust of a partner might serve as a way to sabotage the relationship with that partner such that it inhibits one or both partners' from forming deep emotional connections and/or the relationship ends.

Concurrency may further reflect men's (subconscious) attempts at maintaining control over the relationship by being the person whose behavior causes the relationship demise thereby losing or preventing an emotional attachment between the partners. This particular line of reasoning is reflective of masculine role strain suffered via unconscious experiences, which men may be unaware of, but which are ingrained in the male psyche and can periodically emerge to impact attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Levant, 1996; O'Neil et al., 1995). However, the exploration of unconscious experiences of masculine role strain and their impact on concurrency

beliefs and behaviors are beyond the scope of this current dissertation project, but should be considered in future public health research on this topic.

Concurrency as Discrepancy Strain

Discrepancy masculine role strain, which occurs when men do not conform to their internalized masculinity ideologies (e.g., TGC, high SS)—which often reflect traditional masculinity ideologies (Pleck, 1995), appeared to exert the least amount of influence on the concurrency beliefs and behaviors of the men in the focus groups. Given the SS of many of the men in the focus group sample (i.e., low-income, low full-time employment, no college degree), the author believed that discrepancy masculine role strain would exert a more important and apparent influence on the men's perceptions of their masculinity and their concurrency-related beliefs and behaviors. Countering this hypothesis, men in Focus Groups 1 and 3 discussed receiving financial benefits from certain types of relationships with women and cited the receipt of those benefits as a reason to maintain concurrent sexual partnerships.

> **MOD:** *It seems like the big difference with friends with benefits is someone who is helping you out.*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **M:** *Benefits.*
> **M:** *Pay your cell phone bill*
> **MOD:** *Someone said car. Someone said maybe a little money.*
> **M:** *A little food in there.*
> **M:** *That's friends with benefit right there.*
> **(Focus Group 1: Males Ages 18-24 years)**

While the receipt of financial benefits as a reason for engaging in concurrency was discussed, it was not clear from the discussions whether all of the men received those benefits because they

could not procure them on their own or whether they felt less manly because they were being financially provided for by a female partner. One respondent in Focus Group 3 did discuss receiving financial benefits (e.g., putting money in commissary) from different women while in prison.

> **M:** *Because when you're sitting in prison, well for me, when main that comes to see you every weekend, put money in your commissary, that's passionate enough right there. That show me that you care about me. So in reality, got to have –*
>
> **M:** *I've been in two time and did some big, but look--.*
>
> **M:** *The ones that were doing, putting money in my junk, I ain't even deal with them when I got out.*
>
> **M:** *That was wrong.*
>
> **M:** *Get the cell phone in your name and after that, toodaloo.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

However, concurrency was not directly discussed and seems unlikely that he could have maintained multiple sexual partnerships while in prison. Moreover, because the participant did not elaborate on whether he maintained all of these relationships once being released from prison, it was not clear from the discussion if he engaged in concurrency with these partners.

While the focus groups' discussions contained no strong evidence of economic-based discrepancy strain impacting concurrency behaviors, some of the men in the focus groups did discuss the importance of financial stability to one's attractiveness as a man. When discussing women who engage in concurrency with a man who is already in a relationship, the following perspective was offered:

> **M:** *Basically they get jealous of the other woman so they all want to take her place anyway because they know you already have some money. So they going to act like we position around so they can take her place*
>
> **MOD:** *So you're saying especially if he has some money?*

M: Basically.

MOD: Okay.

M: if you ain't got no money in this world, you ain't got anything.

(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)

In addition to impacting men's masculine attractiveness, economic strain also cited by men in both focus groups held with 25-34 year-olds as one of the relationship issues that men are dealing with today.

Although economic discrepancy strain was not directly cited by any of the men as a reason for their own concurrency behaviors, participants described men's perceived economic stability or higher SS as a motivation for women to engage in concurrency. While discussing the ways in which relationships between Black men and women are depicted in the media, one participant remarked on how he believed the media underscored economic prosperity as a reasonable motivation for women's pursuit of concurrent sexual partnerships, which led some women to engage in the behavior. One participant remarked the following:

> *M: I'm saying like some husbands like you be looking at someone like – it's like real, really tough, it's hard out there for being a black man; it's real hard out there. So you may be looking at something like on the movie or something and like a man, he trying his best, but he broke, but he's trying his best. He's trying to do his duties or whatever, and some other man may come along, he maybe got money. Like TV, it plays a major thing with someone's mind who really don't have the proper knowledge to maintain. You know what I'm saying? And women like material things, she want to be taken to the nicest restaurant and stuff, but that man who really can't do that like that, he just trying to take care of home first. Another man come in there and slide in there, he got that, but really he really don't love her, he just you know what I'm saying, he just buying you really. A prostitute really.*

(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)

The participant's assessment illustrates the stress that can be induced by men's inability to provide financially for their partners in the same manner as other 'competing' men. In addition,

this assessment provides insights into the ways some men's inability to live up to masculinity

norms prescribing economic success and stability might elicit experiences of discrepancy strain.

Additionally, the participant's categorization of women as people who "like material things" and

women who engage in concurrency for financial benefits as "prostitutes" also exemplifies some

stereotypical views about gender held by some men. Such stereotypical views set the stage for

and provide more context for understanding concurrency among Black men—points which will

be discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation.

<u>Discussion and Implications for Future Research and Intervention</u>

In seeking to support and expand the quantitative findings regarding the individual- and

social structural-level factors impacting Black men's engagement in concurrency, the analyses

for this chapter demonstrated that masculinity norms, masculinity ideologies (e.g., respectability

and reputational masculinities), masculine role strain, relationship dissatisfaction, and stress-

coping processes exert important influences on some Black men's views of and engagement in

concurrency. The manner in which the men described concurrency and the reasons they cited for

and against engaging in the behavior exemplified the concurrency-related beliefs and behaviors

the men viewed as male-appropriate.

It was clear from the results of the qualitative analyses for this chapter that concurrency had

varying meanings and implications for the men based on the multiple ways in which they

described the behavior. Some of the descriptions (e.g., nature, enjoying life) were more favorable

of the behavior, while others (e.g., cheating, betrayal) were less than favorable. The men's

varying meanings and views associated with concurrency demonstrate that a singular approach to

researching or intervening on concurrency among Black men will likely be insufficient to

address the sociocultural factors driving the behavior. Therefore, a multi-theoretical, multiple-

factor approach such as the one used in this dissertation study may yield more positive results regarding better understanding the drivers of concurrency and reducing Black men favorable views and engagement in the behavior.

In addition to multiple meanings and descriptions, the men cited multiple individual-level (e.g., personal values, emotion restriction) and social structural-level (e.g., high concurrency in the community, male-to-female ratio imbalances) factors influencing their decisions to engage in or refrain from concurrency. The overall results of these qualitative analyses demonstrate that concurrency among Black men is a complex phenomenon. The factors cited by the men as drivers of concurrency suggest that multi-level research studies and interventions may yield the most beneficial impact on reducing concurrency and HIV risk for Black men.

In order to accomplish the goal of reducing concurrency and HIV risk among Black men, future research should further explore how personal values, such as self-respect, impact Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors and how those personal values are developed, challenged or supported by the sociocultural environment. Research in this vein should also explore whether such values or men's views of concurrency as a natural process develops and evolves over time. In particular, the research should seek to understand whether differences in personal values explain why some men view concurrency as a benign behavior (e.g., describing it as nature or enjoying life) while others view it as a more malignant behavior (e.g., categorizing it as cheating or a betrayal). This line of research may yield information that illuminates how socially constructed masculinity ideologies shape values linked to Black men's sexual risk-taking and how they might be challenged to positively impact concurrency behaviors and reduce HIV risk. It is plausible that expanding the evidence base in this way could contribute to the development of concurrency prevention interventions which challenge men to think about their

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own personal values in relationship to their health or health goals and promote the adoption of personal values which are more likely to enhance rather than impede Black men attempts at improving their health (i.e., lowering this risk for HIV/STIs).

The interplay of reputational and respectability masculinities and their influence on concurrency unearthed in this study is also worthy of further exploration in future research studies and interventions targeting concurrency and HIV risk prevention among Black men. While it was clear from the focus groups that respectability and reputation were two important aspects of the men's construction of manhood, it was not clear from the discussion whether a deficit in the respectability arena caused a masculine imbalance and overreliance on reputational mechanisms to build an acceptable level of masculine strength, as suggested by Whitehead's (1997; 1994) "Big Man Little man Complex". Future explorations of this interplay should further explore the concept of masculine imbalance to empirically support or refute the notion that a reduction in respectability masculinity will lead to a heavier reliance on reputational masculinity to build masculine strength. While both respectability and reputational masculinities emerged as important factors influencing Black men's decision to engage in concurrency, it was unclear from the focus group data how or whether the use of these strategies to build masculine strength are hinged (or predicated) on one another. Further clarification of the relationship between respectability and reputational masculinity and its impact on concurrency can offer information which can help to identify methods for manipulating this relationship (e.g., increase Black men's access to resources to build respectability-based masculine strength). A deeper understanding of these masculinity-related factors and their influence on concurrency could help to increase the effectiveness of HIV prevention strategies for Black men aimed at reducing their risk behaviors.

It is critical that future investigations focus on understanding how masculinities encouraging emotion restriction impact the quality of relationship communication and subsequent relationship dissatisfaction. Understanding if and how Black men communicate negative emotions or discontent arising in relationships with their partners might help to identify ways in which future interventions can assist Black men negotiate and secure relief from or resolutions for their dissatisfaction that does not include resorting to behaviors like concurrency which place their health in jeopardy. This research should also seek to examine the various ways in which Black men cope with the stress of relationship dissatisfaction in order to identify healthier coping strategies used by men which do not entail engaging in concurrency.

Forthcoming studies examining concurrency among Black men could conduct one-on-one interviews and focus groups or use other qualitative methods to clearly distinguish between societal masculinity norms and individually-endorsed masculinity ideologies to determine their distinct and synergistic influence on Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. Such an understanding will help to steer multi-level HIV prevention interventions towards those masculinity ideologies that are most harmful and consistently internalized by Black men.

Finally, future interventions targeting concurrency among Black men should work to implement masculine transformation strategies suggested by previous research studies (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Dworkin et al., 2013; Fleming et al., 2016; Levant, 1995; Whitehead, 1997) and in the previous chapter of this dissertation study. Such interventions would promote the adoption and endorsement of those masculinity ideologies that are less likely to support men's engagement in concurrency (e.g., self-respect, protector of children) and putting their health at risk (e.g., concurrency as natural to men, risk-taking). Working to transform certain masculine norms and ideologies which emphasize risk-taking can positively impact not

only Black men's concurrency behaviors and HIV risks, but also other areas of health (e.g., violence victimization and perpetration) where Black men experience disparities.

The results of the qualitative analyses for this chapter highlight the importance of masculinities and the need to fully understand the ways in which they impact Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. As public health researchers and interventionist expand their knowledge of the various ways in which Black men develop and perform masculinities, they can create more effective HIV prevention research studies and health promotion programs for them which are responsive to these factors. The results of these qualitative analyses enhance understanding about the myriad and nuanced ways masculinities contribute to concurrency and move the field towards developing more comprehensive programs designed to decrease the HIV burden that Black men shoulder.

CHAPTER 7: QUALITATIVE AIM 2 FINDINGS- COGNITIONS AND AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES SHAPING BLACK MEN'S CONCURRECNY

Social Cognitions Impacting Concurrency

The analyses for this chapter were designed to explore the cognitions and affective experiences shaping Black men's concurrency behaviors. For the purposes of this dissertation study, cognitions refer to men's restrictive gender views and stereotypical attitudes about masculinities. Men's masculine role strains and conflicts are deeply tied to the affective experiences arising in their performance of gender roles (Levant 1996; O'Neil et al., 1995). The results in the previous chapter offer additional insights into specific cognitions impacting men's concurrency behavior. For example, the previous chapter discussed men's perception of concurrency as a naturally occurring phenomenon sanctioning their engagement in the behavior. Initially it was unclear whether men believed concurrency was 'natural' for all people or just for men. Further analyses to determine how such cognitions shape Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors revealed that concurrency was only viewed by the participants as acceptable and thus natural for men. The men in the focus groups described the widely held belief that men who engage in concurrency are praised by their peers and others in their community while the women who do are criticized. When asked how women who engage in concurrency are described the men offered words such as "ho," "slut," and "prostitute," but offered terms like "pimp," "player," and "gigolo" when asked how men who engage in concurrency are described.

The gendered-double-standard in the ways that men and women who engage in concurrency are portrayed is further reflected in participant's discussions about men's stereotypical beliefs about women. For example, men described "good girls" as women who are not easily persuaded to engage in sexual relationships with men and who are monogamous when they do finally have sex with those male partners.

> **MOD:** *What do you mean if a girl's good or not?*
>
> **M:** *If she's loyal to you and only you. You could never say that. Just like the same thing for a man.*
>
> **M:** *Yeah. Good girl meaning she only have one sexual partner, that's me.*
>
> **(Focus Group 2: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

While engaging in concurrency was seen as disqualifying criterion for women to be considered "good," the same was not true for men. When discussing possible radio ads which might effectively get men to reduce their engagement in concurrency, several men unfavorably rated one ad with the message, "A good man has only one partner." When asked why they disliked this particular ad, one participant in Focus Group 3 offered the following,

> **M:** *It don't make you a good man because you have one partner. I take care of my kids, I went to child support, my kids, they with me. I pay all the bills. I'm a good man on the perspective part of my responsibility. But sexual-wise don't make me a good man because I'm laying down with one woman. I could be faithful to this woman, but that ain't paying my bills –*
>
> **(Focus Group 3: Males Ages 25-34 years)**

This participant's response reflects how various definitions of masculinity might impact concurrency behaviors. He and other focus group participants affirming his assessment of a "good man" highlighted that being a financial provider to one's family is a more salient indicator of a man's manhood than refraining from engaging in concurrency. Moreover, this assessment

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reflects some men's restrictive gender beliefs in that it demonstrates how some men can have discrepant cognitions about concurrency for men and another for women.

Men's discrepant cognitions about how engaging in concurrency is socially sanctioned was also evidenced by their description of the type of women they perceived as being more deserving of male partners who engage in concurrency. Focus group discussions along this line appeared to reflect beliefs that is less socially acceptable to cheat on a 'good girl' than a 'bad' one, such as those women who engage in concurrency themselves or have sex with a man soon after meeting him. Men discussed this set of cognitions as a chief motivation for decisions to refrain from concurrency engagement when in a relationship with a good girl and possibly discouraging their friends from engaging in concurrency if they too were in a relationship with a good girl. Interestingly, the men's discussion also suggested that even the good girls get cheated on by their male partners and thus the good girl status is not enough to prevent some men from maintaining concurrent sexual partnerships.

Men in the focus groups offered some insights about why men override cognitions that support committed relationships with good girls and engage in concurrency while they are in such relationships. The insights provided reflect a deeper internalization of cognitions stereotypical, negative views of the female gender. In the above quote where a participant in Focus Group 2 defined the term "good girl" he also commented on how it was difficult to tell whether some women were in fact engaging in concurrency and unworthy of the good girl label—as defined by men. Several men portrayed women as sneaky and just as likely as men to engage in concurrency, but more effective at concealing their behavior from male partners than men are at concealing it from their female partners. Participants also portrayed women as highly emotional and prone to conflict, which they assert contributes to men's relationship

dissatisfaction and most likely increases their chances of engaging in concurrency as a stress-coping mechanism. These stereotypical portrayals of women as emotional and untrustworthy demonstrate how cognitions contribute to men's moral disengagement, the development and endorsement of persuasive arguments for engaging in a behavior considered unhealthy or deviant, even when they are in relationships with women whom they consider "good girls."

Affect

Despite the number of stereotypical gendered cognitions offered by Black men in the focus groups to justify engaging in concurrency, they also appeared connected to discrepant affective experiences (i.e., emotional conflicts). Although men described believing that concurrency was a natural behavior for them, they also expressed feeling that it was a form of cheating, a betrayal to their relationships, and best kept hidden from their partners. When asked what advice they would give to a friend who is engaged in concurrency, the men in Focus Group 3 responded with the following discussion about the necessity of concealing concurrency from their female partners:

> **M:** *– coming around with the [other] girl.*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **M:** *You letting too many people see what you doing –*
> **MOD:** *Oh, so if he's not being discreet, if he's disrespecting –*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **MOD:** *But you're not saying –*
> **M:** *Yeah.*
> **MOD:** *– you're not telling him to stop, though?*
> **M:** *Yeah.*

M: Yeah in a sense.

M: We telling him to slow it down.

M: Chill. He needs to chill.

M: He can't stop.

M: – everything.

M: Yeah, fall back.

M: Take it to the [hotel] room.

(Focus Group 3: Males Ages 25-34 years)

This suggests that men grapple with trying to define as an acceptable behavior by male peers as long as the behavior is not displayed for the men's partners to see. The previous quotation also suggests that subjective norms, or men's perceived social pressure around engaging in concurrency because it's the "natural thing" for men to do or because this behavior was modeled as male-appropriate by male family and community members, may work to sustain men's engagement in the behavior despite discrepant emotions or affective experiences about the acceptability of concurrency. Moreover, it was apparent from the men's discussions that moral disengagement played a significant role in their concurrency beliefs and behaviors. While some of the men held and endorsed stereotypical beliefs or cognitions about men's concurrency (e.g., concurrency as natural, enjoyable, and a source of male pride) which they used to justify their engagement in the behavior, they simultaneously held beliefs which categorize concurrency as immoral and thus lead to affective experiences characterized by guilt. These more self-conscious affective experiences were described as leading some men to conceal their concurrency behaviors (i.e., such as when they hide concurrency from their partners).

The discrepancy between men's cognitions and affective experiences was also apparent when men discussed their fears around the health and social risks of engaging in concurrency. In

addition to expressing fear of the social consequences of being caught engaging in concurrency (e.g., relationship discord or coming to an end), men also discussed fears of broader health and social consequences (i.e., contracting STIs) as a motivator for refraining in concurrency. Once participant in Focus Group 1 cited fear of "diseases" as a reason why men would not engage in concurrency and another in Focus Group 3 felt that the only way to get men to refrain from concurrency was if you "get fear in them." However, some men override such affective experiences and still engage in concurrency for a variety of reasons despite their fears of contracting an STI. The conflict between men's feelings of fear, relief, and manhood seemed to impact men's concurrency-related cognitions and behaviors in different ways, with some men reporting surrendering to their feelings of fear and resisting concurrency while others submitting more to desires for affective relief and manhood they associated with concurrency.

The results of the analyses for this chapter demonstrates that men's stereotypical and traditional cognitions around gender roles for men and women can contribute to men's likelihood to engage in concurrency. The discussion among the men showed that these cognitions and ensuing affective experiences contribute to men's moral disengagement, the phenomenon where they develop and endorse persuasive reasons, such as women are untrustworthy or some women deserve concurrency, to justify their engagement in the behavior even if they classify the behavior as cheating and think it is immoral. Previous scholarly work examining the influence of masculinity on men's views of women demonstrate a long-standing cognitions of women as untrustworthy, highly emotional, and sexually devious (Karras, 2003; Okin, 1999). There is the belief among some scholars that these cognitions, which stereotype and degrade women and are used to justify men's sexual behaviors, is a form of hegemonic masculinity designed to keep women in subordinate social positions relative to men (Connell, 2005; Okin, 1999). This line of

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reasoning is supported by the focus groups data which demonstrated that men found it acceptable for men to engage in concurrency to meet their romantic, sexual, or financial needs, but not unacceptable for women—leaving women with fewer options for coping with their relationships dissatisfaction and more reliant on one male partner to provide relief.

<center>Implications for Future Research and Intervention</center>

Several suggestions for future research and interventions were generated from the data analyzed for this chapter. First, additional research on this topic should further explore the cognitions driving the gendered double-standard that emerged from this data as an important factor influencing men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. It will be important for this research to seek an understanding of how these cognitions and double-standards are developed and refined by men over time. Given that the cognitions men endorse and internalized are rooted in traditional and hegemonic masculinity norms, it will be important for future research to also consider how these stereotypical gender concepts inform Black men's individual masculinity ideologies and how masculinities inform men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors.

Additional concurrency research among Black men should employ qualitative research techniques to understand how cognitions and affective experiences impact Black TGNC men's beliefs about and engagement in concurrency. This line of research inquiry is particularly warranted given that men's stereotypical views about gender may differentially impact how they think and behave with female partners vs. male ones. Moreover, it is warranted because TGNC men's concurrency may be driven by different cognitions and affective experiences than their TGC counterparts. Given that there were no TGNC participants in the focus group, conducting this particular research may provide information on the cognitions and affective experiences which may be unique to TGNC men. Public Health practitioners can then leverage this

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information to help develop HIV prevention interventions which are responsive to the unique

perspectives and needs of this especially vulnerable sub-population of Black men.

Future research exploring concurrency among Black men should also explore the

emotional conflicts Black men experience while trying to reconcile their discrepant beliefs about

concurrency, such as it being natural and enjoyable while simultaneously believing that it's

immoral and a behavior that should be hidden. Better understanding of how this conflict is

experienced may help interventionists develop persuasive anti-concurrency health promotion

messages that capitalize on men's moral dilemmas around concurrency and provide alternative

ways to resolve emotional conflicts.

Similarly, interventions addressing concurrency among Black men should also employ

masculine transformation techniques described in previous chapters. As suggested earlier, these

interventions focus on helping men to change perceptions of manhood that place their health in

peril and emphasize forms of masculinity that contribute to better health outcomes. Additionally,

in light of the findings in this chapter, it will also be important for these interventions to

challenge men to think about the ways in which traditional and hegemonic masculinity

contribute to their critical and distrustful attitudes toward women, which in turn adds to men's

relationship dissatisfaction and views of concurrency as an acceptable behavior for men.

Limitations

The findings from these qualitative analyses should be accepted in light of some

limitations. The study results' lack of generalizability to all Black men is a limitation. The

Concurrency Media Study data arose from a small sample of Black men living in 2 of the 100

counties in North Carolina. Therefore, the findings from this study may only be applicable to

those set of Black men and not all Black men in the two counties, the state of North Carolina, or the entire U.S.

Another limitation of this study is the small number of focus groups (N = 3). Additional focus group data may have provided more breadth and depth of information regarding the topics of interests for this dissertation. Moreover, because it is presumed that all of the men in the three focus groups were heterosexual, this dissertation is limited in its ability to speak fully for Black TGNC men regarding the concurrency-related issues that are addressed in this study.

A final limitation was the difficulty encountered while trying to disentangle societal masculinity norms from men's individual endorsement and enactment of masculinity ideologies. This difficulty stems largely from focus group methodology, which relies on collecting perspectives of groups. This methodological approach made it challenging to clearly distinguish which masculine ideals men endorse in their own ideologies and enact in their individual behaviors from those ideals which are a reflection of their perceptions of other men's collective masculinity ideologies around concurrency.

Despite these limitation, the importance of the influence of masculinities on Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors was highlighted throughout the focus group narratives. The focus group narratives revealed that masculinities impacted men's cognitions and how they perceived male and female behaviors, the reasons men offered to justify engaging in concurrency, and the emotional conflicts they experienced when determining whether concurrency is an acceptable behavior. The information emerging from the analyses conducted provides a clear course for future research and interventions which have the potential to reduce Black men's risk behaviors and high rates of HIV infection.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

A goal of this dissertation study was to highlight individual- and social structural-level drivers of Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. More specifically, this study sought to increase the understanding of how sociodemographic characteristics, masculinities, and stress-coping responses work individually and collectively to influence Black men's engagement in the behavior. Overall, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted for this dissertation project provide supporting evidence for the numerous previous studies (Adimora et al., 2006; Bingham et al., 2013; Bowleg et al., 2014; Bowleg et al., 2013; Bowleg et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2009; Latkin et al., 2007; Macauda et al., 2011; Nunn et al., 2014; Nunn et al., 2011; Ragnarsson et al., 2010; Reed et al., 2012; Senn et al., 2011; Wheldon & Pathak, 2010) which identify these factors as important influences on Black men's concurrency. The dissertation results also provide a more nuanced understanding of the cognitive processes and affective experiences underlying Black men's attitudes about and motivations to engage in concurrency.

The quantitative results provide empirical support for the influence of sociodemographic factors and masculinities on Black men's concurrency. These factors included SS, sexual orientation, and traditional masculinity ideologies. SS was highlighted in the Introduction (Chapter 1) of this dissertation as a factor previously identified in other research studies (Adimora et al., 2004; Bowleg & Raj, 2012; Denning & DiNenno, 2010; Maher et al., 2011; Millett et al., 2012) as a driver of concurrency and HIV risk among Black men. The quantitative analyses, using the SS-based index of respectability masculinity created for this dissertation,

confirmed that SS does exert an important influence on Black men's concurrency--albeit in inconsistent ways. Additionally, the SS-based index's influence on men's odds of concurrency provide partial support for Whitehead's BMLMC framework, which asserts that high levels of respectability masculinity can lessen men's reliance on reputational masculinity mechanisms to build masculine strength.

In addition to SS, the quantitative analyses results revealed sexual orientation as another important sociodemographic influencer on men's concurrency. While TGNC sexual orientation was associated with a lessened odds of concurrency in the direct effects analyses, its interaction with SS in the moderated analyses resulted in greater odds of concurrency. These discrepant results along with previous studies which found higher odds of concurrency among TGNC when compared to TGC men (Dyer et al., 2014; Gorbach et al., 2009) further demonstrate that sexual orientation does exert an important and varying influence on concurrency. The discrepant influence of sexual orientation on men's odds of concurrency not only highlights the importance of considering its interaction with sociodemographic characteristics, but also underscore the important influence of masculinities. Masculinities impacted men's odds of concurrency via sexual orientation and traditional masculinity ideologies. The traditional masculinity ideologies scale developed using an exploratory factor analysis approach, reflect men's endorsement of heteronormativity and was shown to exert effects resulting in men's greater odds of concurrency.

The results of the quantitative analyses provide empirical evidence supporting assertions that sociodemographic and masculinities exert an important influence of concurrency outcomes for Black men. The quantitative analyses also help to fill in some of the public health research gaps about the ways in which these factors work individually and in tandem to influence Black men's concurrency outcomes. The qualitative analyses results helped to fill in more gaps by

explicating the role of stress-coping, cognitive, and affective processes in shaping Black men's concurrency. Although it was assumed from the hypothesis driving the quantitative analyses and the theoretical frameworks (e.g., BMLMC, TMSC) guiding this dissertation study, that low-SS would be considered stressful by some men, this assumption could not be verified via the quantitative analyses.

The qualitative analyses helped provide some insights about this unexpected finding by fleshing out how stress-coping processes impact men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors and providing a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which those process, masculinities, and sociodemographic factors impact concurrency. The qualitative analyses also examined and provided insight about how these and other concurrency-related factors operated at the individual- and social structural-levels. The results of the qualitative analyses revealed relationship dissatisfaction as a primary driver of concurrency and provided clarification as to why men are discontented (e.g., sexual frustration) with the quality of their romantic and sexual relationships. While there was no direct question in the focus group guide about men's distress in regards to their relationship dissatisfaction, it was clear from the participants' discussions that seeking relief from relationship dissatisfaction was an impetus for some men to engage in concurrency and that the behavior could be construed as a stress-coping response.

Relatedly, the qualitative analyses also revealed Black men's experiences of masculine role strain and additional stressors, as drivers of concurrency behaviors for some Black men. Trauma strain appeared to impact men's concurrency behavior by eliciting men's restrictions of their emotions when involved in a disagreement with a partner, when desiring to express romantic feelings for a potential partner for the first time, or when seeking a new romantic or sexual partnership while still contending with the emotional trauma experiences during a

previous relationship. The qualitative analyses results helped to frame these experiences of

trauma strain as stressors which elicit cognitive, emotional, and behavioral stress responses.

These three types of stress responses also occurred as a result of men's experiences of

dysfunction strain as they endorsed certain traditional and hegemonic masculinity ideologies,

relied on reputational mechanisms to build masculine strength, and enacted forms of masculinity

which encouraged their engagement in concurrency and subsequently increased their risk for

HIV infection.

The results of the qualitative analyses illustrated the manners in which stress responses

impacted men's concurrency beliefs and behavior. Men in the focus group described behavioral

stress responses which prompted them to examine the potential health (e.g., increased risk for

STIs), emotional (e.g., relief of feelings of relationship dissatisfactions), and social (e.g.,

relationship discord) consequences of concurrency to determine their own expected outcomes of

engaging in the behavior and whether it was worthwhile to engage in concurrency for relief. The

men's stress-coping response appeared to motivate them to examine whether they have

significant enough motivation (e.g., wanting to be a positive role model) to self-regulate their

behavior and refrain from engaging in concurrency. The stress-coping response also seemed to

stimulate some of the men to rest on cognitions or persuasive reasoning (e.g., some women

deserve concurrency, concurrency is natural for men) that supported or affirmed their decisions

to engage in concurrency or deem it as acceptable male behavior. Additionally, men's emotional

stress response appeared to include a reduced ability or resistance towards effectively expressing

their feelings and emotions around their experiences of stress (i.e., relationships dissatisfaction).

Results of the qualitative analyses support the theoretical assumptions that there would be an

increased likelihood of engaging in concurrency for men who were more emotionally restrictive,

had positive expectations for the outcomes of their engaging in concurrency, had less motivation to self-regulate, or had developed and endorsed persuasive reasons for engaging in the behavior.

Many of the persuasive reasons for engaging in concurrency cited by the men in the focus groups were heavily influenced by their masculinity ideologies, cognitions, and affective experiences and reflected a level of moral disengagement. Cognitions conveying stereotypical gender views were often cited in the focus groups as both reasons for men to engage in concurrency and reasons why the men's female partners were deserving of concurrency or being "cheated on." The men also endorsed masculinity ideologies which normalized and naturalized concurrency as a male behavior. The impact of these cognitions and endorsed ideologies on concurrency seemed to be facilitated by affective experiences encouraging concurrency. However, the impact of such cognitions and ideologies also seemed to be counteracted by affective experiences (e.g., feelings of guilt around engaging in the behavior), and competing motivations for not engaging in the behavior, such as not wanting to betray a partner. The cognitions and affective experiences detailed by participants suggests a number of things. First, it reinforces the concept of masculinity plurality (Levant, 1996; Rogers et al., 2015) by demonstrating that men can offer a number of characteristics which they use to define manhood and masculinity, such as being a good role model or concurrency as a natural behavior, that result in men either engaging in concurrency or refraining from the behavior. The cognitions and affective experiences impacting some Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors also imply that some men desire to and do maintain healthy, monogamous relationships with their female partners. It also may indicate that for some men, engaging in concurrency is not simply about power maintenance via the social embodiment of hegemonic masculinity or men using their bodies to enact and sustain gendered social hierarchies. For some men, concurrency is a form of

self-protection against the hurt experienced in previous relationships. Overall, the results of the qualitative analyses results demonstrated that men's cognitions and affective experiences, which shape and are shaped by their masculinity ideologies, play a critical role in men beliefs about concurrency and their decision to engage in it.

The qualitative results provided an ample number of structural-level reasons cited by men in the study as reasons for engaging in concurrency. In addition to the individual-level ideologies, cognitions, affective experiences cited above, men also discussed how these factors are informed and supported by social structural factors in the environments they occupy or navigate. For example, men discussed observing concurrency being modeled in radio and TV media and observing their fathers and other men in their communities engage in concurrency. Men also discussed supportive community norms for men's engagement in concurrency which include high rates of the behavior by among others in the community, men's concurrency going unchecked by peers, and multiple venues and opportunities to meet partners to engage in the behavior. These factors were described as key contributors to men's perception of concurrency as a male-appropriate behavior, the cognitions supporting their concurrency engagement, and their perceptions of widespread concurrency in the communities in which they live. These factors also demonstrate how decisions to engage in behaviors like concurrency which can be viewed by some as deviant, individual choices may actually reflect larger societal norms and environmental constraints (e.g., few opportunities to have healthy relationships modeled, imbalanced sex ratios) that help socialize male behavior in ways that may compromise their health or that of others with whom they interact, such as romantic/sexual partners.

The results of the quantitative analyses provided a greater understanding of the individual-level SS, masculinity, and stress-coping factors driving concurrency among Black

men. The qualitative analyses results deepen this understanding by relying on the voices of Black

men to identify additional individual-level drivers of concurrency and the social structural-level

factors which directly and indirectly, impact HIV risk behavior. The understanding of

concurrency among Black men derived from the quantitative and qualitative analyses were

further deepened by an examination of the cognitions and affective experiences shaping some

Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors.

Implications for Future Research and Intervention

Overall, the results of this dissertation demonstrate that there are multiple factors and

considerations which impact men's engagement in concurrency. In turn, these multiple factors

demonstrate that there are potentially multiple points of interventions which can be employed to

reduce concurrency and HIV infection rates among Black men. Several points of interest

emerged regarding implications for future research addressing concurrency among Black men.

These implications have been discussed in the previous chapters. The table below summarizes

them.

Table 13: Implications for Future Research on Concurrency among Black Men

Implications for Future Research
Future Research Should… 1. Work to better understand various healthy stress-coping responses employed by Black men. 2. Explore the most effective strategies for providing jobs and education advancement opportunities to Black men. 3. Further examine the influence of sexual orientation on concurrency and how identity, attraction, and behavior differentially impact the behavior. 4. Work to differentiate how various masculinity archetypes impact concurrency beliefs and behaviors. 5. Examine the interactions of various masculinities and sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., SS) to determine the range of ways in which men's concurrency behaviors are impacted.

6. Continue to explore the relationship between reputational and respectability masculinity and how they jointly and independently impact concurrency beliefs and behaviors.
7. Further explore unconscious experiences to determine how men experience masculine role strain in this realm and how it subsequently impacts concurrency beliefs and behaviors.
8. Further explore the communication strategies used by men to discuss relationship dissatisfaction and other factors identified as driving concurrency with their partners.
9. Examine how men's stereotypical gender views of themselves and women are developed, reinforced, or challenged.
10. Explore the emotional gender conflict that men experience while having both favorable and negative views of concurrency.
11. Further examine the gender-double-standard which promotes and approves of concurrency by men but not women.
12. Include more traditional gender non-conforming men in its participant samples.
13. Incorporate one-on-one interviews in its exploration of the impact of masculinities on concurrency.

Pursuing these proposed lines of research inquiry will increase public health knowledge of the various factors driving concurrency for both Black TGC and TGNC men. As demonstrating in this dissertation, these factors include masculinities and how they both shape and are shaped by other factors such as SS or sexual orientation; stress-coping responses which are acceptable to men and present lower risks of poor health than concurrency; masculinity norms and ideologies; and job and educational advancement opportunities. Findings stemming from future research can then be leveraged in the development of enhanced HIV prevention strategies which are more responsive to the sociocultural realities of Black men and thus more likely to positively impact their concurrency beliefs and behaviors.

<div align="center">Implications for Future Interventions</div>

Increased jobs and educational training opportunities and masculine transformation initiatives are two clear suggestions for concurrency interventions which are responsive to the sociocultural realities of Black men. Given the potential protective effect of SS for some men, increasing opportunities (e.g., access to high paying jobs) to increase SS and respectability

masculinity levels for some men can enhance existing HIV prevention strategies for Black men by allowing the men to build masculine strength via non-reputational masculinity mechanisms which place their health at risk. Addressing and alleviating Black men's diminished socioeconomic standing is an important step to take in HIV prevention efforts. Given the potential positive health benefits of increased SS and in light of this population's historical and contemporary blocked access to economic success due to structural racism and other forms of discrimination, such as homophobia for Black TGNC men (Mays et al., 2004; Williams, 1999), taking this step could also have broader impacts on achieving health equity. While structural racism and discrimination were not directly assessed in this dissertation, previous studies (Bauermeister et al., 2015; Metzl, 2013; Millett et al., 2012; Williams, 1999) have clearly demonstrated that these factors limit Black men's ability to raise their SS, contribute to their levels of HIV risks, and therefore should be included in future research and interventions seeking to increase Black men's SS in general or as a means to lower their concurrency behavior and HIV risk. Microfinance initiatives where government bodies implement policies to provide funding and training for entrepreneurial pursuits among Black men is one concrete suggestion for a social structural intervention targeting concurrency in this population. Such initiatives have the potential to increase Black men's ability to procure respectability masculinity, reduce their reliance on reputational masculinity, and ultimately reduce their engagement in concurrency and HIV risk.

Masculine transformation interventions which promote men's endorsement and adoption of healthier forms of masculinity can also have a positive impact on men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. This form of masculine resocialization can help Black men to understand the socially constructed nature of gender and masculinity norms and ideologies. In addition, efforts

in this vein could emphasize respectability masculinity while deemphasizing reliance on reputational masculinity as means to build masculine strength or resolve relationship conflict. At the individual-level, masculine resocialization can promote the adoption of more positively persuasive personal values (e.g., being a positive role model), healthy stress-coping responses (e.g., mind-body exercises, talking with someone/partner), and healthy relationships skills (e.g., open and honest communication, conflict negotiation and resolution) which can result in the reduction of men's experiences of dysfunction and trauma strain.

At the social structural level, masculine transformation work can utilize health communication campaigns to change social norms around the definitions of male-appropriate beliefs and behaviors. Given the media depictions of concurrency in Black relationships described by the men in this dissertation, producing and promoting media depictions of healthy masculinity and non-concurrent sexual relationships among Black men may serve to change individual and collective definitions of masculinity which sanction men's engagement in concurrency. Additionally, incorporating elements of masculine transformation into school health class curricula, an approach used in previous gender transformation interventions (Dworkin et al., 2013), can aid in institutionalizing masculine transformation approaches to improving Black men's health by reducing their endorsement of unhealthy forms of masculinity and ultimately their HIV risk behaviors.

This transformative work of expanding the definitions of manhood beyond the traditional archetypes which have historically dominated societal norms and at times placed men's health at increased peril is vital to HIV prevention for all Black men. Such an expansion could help more Black men achieve a healthy concept of self—especially for TGNC men who may need to develop a positive integrated identity which encompasses their race and sexual orientation. In

turn, Black men's experiences of discrepancy strain may be reduced, subsequently lowering their chances of engaging in concurrency and risk for HIV infection. Moreover, Black men may experience less dysfunction strain as social norms around masculinity shift and expand to emphasize respectability and healthier forms of masculinity and deemphasize reputational and less healthy forms of masculinity (e.g., risk-taking). In turn, Black men may be less likely to conform to masculinity ideologies and norms which increase their likelihood of engaging in concurrency and HIV risk.

Limitations

Many of the limitations of this dissertation have been discussed in previous chapters. An important limitation of this dissertation worth mentioning again is the absence of measures which directly assess masculinity ideology and respectability and reputational masculinity. These topics were not the original focus of the NSFG or the Concurrency Media Study. Therefore, they were not specifically addressed in the survey instrument or focus group guide and must be extrapolated using the author's public health expertise and insight into Black men's masculinities and sexual health behaviors. One additional limitation of this dissertation worth noting is the presumption that the men in the study were experiencing masculine role stress/strain associated with low socioeconomic standing and sexual orientation. Such strain was not measured directly. Future research on this topic should utilize validated measures of masculine role strain to more clearly quantity men's levels of strain on its impact on their concurrency beliefs and behaviors.

Strengths

Despite this limitation and others previously discussed, there are several strengths of this dissertation. The use of mixed research methods was a primary strength of this study. It allowed for a significant breadth and depth of understanding of the individual- and social structural-level

factors impacting Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors which could not be ascertained using quantitative or qualitative research methods along. Another strength of this study is its use of a large, nationally-representative quantitative dataset (NSFG). While the qualitative findings were not generalizable and presented limitations to this study, the quantitative findings allowed for some inferences to be made about the impact of the above mentioned factors on Black men's engagement in concurrency across the U.S. The use of a comprehensive and integrated theoretical framework is another strength of the study. This framework provided guidance on steps taken to examine and understand the individual and social structural factors influencing Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. The framework might be especially useful for future research as it provides a systematic mechanism for understanding how phenomena such as low respectability can be perceived as stressful and contribute to Black men's engagement in concurrency as a stress-coping response. It is also suggests clear mechanisms (e.g., masculinity ideologies, cognitions, affective experiences, and personal values) that might lead men subjected to the same social structural factors to have divergent concurrency-related beliefs

These strengths and others addressed in previous chapters makes this a compelling dissertation which contributes to the public health evidence base by offering nuanced understanding about the relationships between SS, masculinities, stress-coping behaviors, and concurrency among Black men. The findings from this study help to advance understanding in the field of public health about factors driving concurrency and subsequently high rates of HIV among Black men. The findings provide clear directions for future research and suggestions for strategies to enhance HIV prevention efforts for both Black TGC and TGNC men.

Black men have long shouldered a disproportionate HIV burden and shortened life expectancy. Lifting this burden off the shoulders of Black men requires that new and existing

HIV prevention research and programming move beyond individual-level explanations and focus more intently on the sociocultural realities of this population. While concurrency is a significant contributor to HIV risk, Black men's engagement in concurrency and their HIV risk are impacted by a complex set of factors, including the masculinities, sociodemographics, cognitions, and affective experiences examined in this dissertation study. Researching these factors will further enhance existing HIV prevention knowledge and provide information to improve strategies for reducing Black men's HIV risk and rates of infection. In turn, Black men may begin to experience the benefits of reduced infection rates which have been recently afforded to other demographic groups considered to be at high risk for HIV. Ultimately, the work can aid public health efforts designed to reduce or eliminate race-based HIV health disparities and improve the health and well-being of Black men across the life course.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Concurrency	Sexual relationships that overlap in time.
Hegemonic Masculinity Ideologies	Norms and beliefs that allow men to express and maintain social power, oftentimes over women or other men (i.e., non-heterosexual and/or feminine men).
Masculine Imbalance	Men's inability to maintain balance in their respectability and reputational masculine strength.
Masculine Role Strain	The negative consequences arising from men's conflicting ideas about traditional masculinity and their attempts and failures to fulfill these masculine roles.
Masculine Socialization	The process of boys and men learning the social expectations and attitudes attributed to their biological male sex
Masculine Strength	Men's perception of how much of a man they are (based upon their idealized level of masculinity).
Masculinity Ideologies	Byproducts of gender socialization and reflection of men's internalization and endorsement of socially constructed norms and beliefs about what constitutes ideal attributes, characteristics, and behaviors men.
Reputational Masculinity	Men's display of masculine strength by "out-drinking" peers when consuming alcohol, winning sports competitions and games, and through the sexual conquest of women.
Respectability Masculinity	Men's display of masculine strength by procuring stable employment, excelling academically, gaining home ownership, and achieving financial stability.
Sociocultural Factors	Environmental forces that influence the beliefs and behaviors of the individuals existing within societies.
Traditional Gender Non-Conforming	Umbrella term used throughout this dissertation to refer to Black men who have sex with men (MSM) and men who have sex with men and women (MSMW), or men who operate outside of heteronormative definitions of masculinity, whether by attraction, identity, and/or behaviors.

Traditional Masculinity Ideologies	Byproducts of gender socialization and traditional masculinity norms which are internalized and endorsed by men.
Traditional Masculinity Norms	Societal standards which prescribe that men should project strength, dominance, individuality, physical aggression, autonomy, and stoicism. They condition men to avoid demonstrating emotion or vulnerability, which could be interpreted as weakness.

APPENDIX B: ANALYTIC MEMOS

Note to the Reader: Throughout the duration of the qualitative analyses process, the author maintained a series of analytic memos as a means of documenting and reflecting upon the data analyses process. In particular, the memos were intended to serve as points of personal reflection for the author to examine his own identities (i.e., Black man, HIV prevention researcher) and their impact on the data analyses process, as well as to serve as a means to connect findings from across the three focus groups. Several key points related to the qualitative analyses process emerged from these analytic memos. The original intent of the focus groups was one key point that continually arose throughout the analyses process and in the analytic memos.

Author's Analytic Memo #1

I am now not sure how in-depth the information about masculinity will be. The focus groups were conducted in order to gather useful information for developing radio ads to explain the risks of concurrency and discourage individuals from engaging in the behavior. The original intent did not include exploring and understanding how masculinities impact concurrency behavior among men. Therefore, the focus group guide questions did not directly inquire into the ways in which masculinities shape men's perceptions of the behavior or likelihood of engaging in it. The moderator also did not probe into this area. This lack of direct inquiry regarding masculinities is causing some concern for me given my desire to not overreach or over-interpret the meaning of concurrency within the context of masculinities for the men in the focus groups. However, it is still important to me to use the comprehensive theoretical framework developed for this dissertation and my experiences as Black man, HIV researcher, public health professional to provide nuance to the understanding of the factors driving Black men's behaviors and influencing their risk for HIV infection.

Author's Analytic Memo #2

As I'm reading through the transcripts, what is obviously missing to me from the transcripts are explicit discussions by the men of talking with their partners about their dissatisfaction. I'm not sure if they have to no avail or if they haven't clearly articulated their wants/needs and dissatisfaction to their partners. I suspect it's the latter. It brings me back to the idea of trauma strain and whether or not many men are able to clearly articulate their emotions for fear of being vulnerable or perceived as too feminine.

Author's Analytic Memo #3

Throughout the course of this dissertation, I have tried to distinguish between masculinity norms (societal beliefs about and definitions of manhood) and masculinity ideologies (individual men's internalization and endorsement of societal beliefs about and definitions of manhood). However, during the qualitative analyses, it was difficult to distinguish between ideologies and norms. The focus group questions were not structured as such to explore this level of nuance and the moderator did not probe for further understanding of the differences between ideals about manhood and masculinity that were the men's own vs. those that are prescribed by the men's communities and which the men may or may not endorse themselves. Most of the masculine ideals offered by the men appeared to be their own individual ideologies compared to social norms, however without direct lines of inquiries it is impossible to discern. I think that future research on masculinity and concurrency among Black men could work to incorporate one-on-one interviews with focus groups to gain a fuller understanding of which masculinity ideologies are socially prescribed, which are individually endorsed and enacted by the men, and how both work individually and synergistically to impact Black men's concurrency behaviors.

Author's Analytic Memo #4

One of the things that I have found interesting throughout the process of analyzing this data is the concept of "othering." This occurred when the men would try to differentiate themselves from their male peers and other men when it came to romantic desires and concurrency behaviors. Many of the men seemed to be of the opinion that while they themselves wanted intimate, romantic, and monogamous (for some) relationships with women, their friends and other men did not want the same. This did not occur frequently throughout the focus groups, but did occur enough for me to take notice. This phenomenon was even more of a salient point to me given my previous memo about the inability to distinguish between men's own personal masculinity ideologies and masculinity norms. The juxtaposition of men's individual beliefs and behaviors regarding concurrency to those held and performed in the larger society of men is an exercise which I think will provide more clarity on the topic of concurrency and masculinity.

Author's Analytic Memo #5

One of the goals of memoing was to provide a mechanism for examining how my experiences and personal views shaped the process for analyzing and interpreting the focus group data. Throughout the process, it was apparent to me that both my personal and professional selves impacted this process. Initially, I had to work to continually examine and check my own personal biases as I began to code, analyze, and interpret the data. As a gay Black male who dates other Black men, I have personally experienced concurrency within the context of a sexual relationship. My personal perspective from that experience is that men do it (concurrency) because they can (i.e., their partners stay in relationships after being cheated on). However, I had to challenge myself on that perspective because if not, I felt that it would limit my ability to openly engage with

the data and identify factors outside of the individual which may be driving his concurrency behavior.

To help with this task, I looked to the vicarious experiences surrounding concurrency that I have had through my Black male friends—both TGC and TGNC. In the many conversations that I have had with them over the years regarding concurrency, I have been provided clarity on dilemmas that men face when trying to achieve satisfaction in their romantic and sexual relationships. The conflict between seeking relief through concurrency and yet also seeing it as wrong and not wanting to hurt your partner is one that I am very familiar. These conversations with my friends provided me with a unique insight into the cognitions, affects, and masculinities influencing Black men's engagement in concurrency. It helped me to understand that the decision to engage in concurrency is not one that is taken lightly and that for most men a lot of forethought goes into deciding whether or not to engage in the behavior.

In addition to the perspectives of my friends, my professional experiences also helped to temper my own personal perspective and allowed me to become more open to the explanations provided by the men in the focus groups regarding concurrency and also to more fully embrace the process of examining social structural and sociocultural factors impacting Black men's concurrency beliefs and behaviors. My original desire to conduct this line of research started with a conversation with a colleague who stated that they believed that men were predators in regards to their sexual relationships with women in the context of high HIV rates in Black sexual networks. This opinion, which I disagreed with, drove my desire to research this topic. My desire was also driven by my own opinion that much of the public health literature on gender and HIV among Blacks used theoretical frameworks on gender, power, and gendered socialization focused on how these factors placed women at greater risk for HIV. I did not feel that the same level of attention

had been paid to how Black men were "victims" of these archaic ideologies which place men's health in peril, as well as that of those who are subjected to men's behaviors (e.g., romantic partners).

The desire to not to portray Black men as predators combined with my own personal experiences with concurrency provided a balance and caused me to constantly check-in with myself to ensure that I was reporting the results accurately. I think it was strength of the analyses process that I had both personal and professional experiences to help understand the phenomenon of concurrency among Black men.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Focus Group Guide: Men's Groups

Introduction (20 minutes)

I am ---, and I will be leading the discussion today. This is _____, who will be taking notes. Thank you -- I appreciate you taking the time to help with this research. This discussion is one of 8 that we will invite people to, to help us with a research project conducted by UNC.

Today we are going to talk about overlapping sexual partnerships among heterosexual (or straight) men and women. Overlapping sexual partnerships are when someone has sexual relationships with multiple people during the same time period. An example would be a man having two women and sleeping with woman 1 on Saturday, woman 2 on Monday and then woman 1 again on Thursday. Our study focuses on relationships between Black men and women but we want to stress that these sexual partnerships happen in other racial groups as well.

Today, we'll talk for about two hours. The purpose of our discussion is to hear all of your different ideas and experiences, and to learn from you what contributes to concurrent sexual partnerships in this community.

Before we start, I want to provide you with some guidance for the discussion. I'll ask questions, and listen for or encourage all of you to respond. I'd like to ensure that everyone gets a chance to voice their ideas, so please speak up if you are usually quiet in a group. For the same reason, if you find yourself talking a lot, it would be good to hold some of your answers to ensure that others have a chance to speak up. People may have differences of opinion about the questions we discuss – that is certainly okay, just as long as everyone stays respectful of others' ideas. If you need a break – to stretch, to go to the bathroom, or because you find something about the discussion a bit difficult to listen to – please just do so. If at any time you feel the need to stop participating, you are free to go.

Any comments you make here tonight will be confidential. Your names or any other identifying information will not be included in our report. We are interested in *what* you as a group have to say, not in *who* says what. So we want you all to feel like you can speak freely. We ask that you respect each other's privacy. Whatever you say and hear tonight is just for this group.

Finally, notice that I will be videotaping our conversation and my assistant will be taking some notes. We'll have you introduce yourselves by first name only. Feel free to make up a name to use during our discussion. We'll not be asking you for any personal, confidential or private information. The note-taking and taping are so we can remember and analyze everything you say, and share it with others working on this project. However, we won't identify any statements to a specific person.

It is important to us that everyone understands exactly what is involved in these focus groups. (Moderator will review each of the subject areas on the form to avoid any literacy problems). Please sign the consent form if you agree to participate and return one signed copy to _____.

Alright then, let's get started by going around the table and having you introduce yourselves.

Discussion

Section 1 (15 minutes)

Let's start by talking a little bit about the media. How do you think Black people are portrayed on TV? How are relationships between Black men and women portrayed?

What about on the radio?

In what ways are these portrayals inaccurate? In what ways are they accurate?

Now, let's change the subject a little.

What comes to mind for you when I say the word "relationship?" What comes to mind when I say "relationships between men and women?"

When I say the words "overlapping sexual partnerships," what does that mean to you? (Be prepared to define the phrase as having more than one sex partner during a period of time.) What does the phrase "messin' around" mean to you? How do your friends talk about having overlapping sexual partnerships/messin' around?

Let's talk about men your age. What different types of relationships involving sex do they have with women?

Are people your age in committed relationships (relationships that are understood to be long-term and monogamous by both partners)? Why or why not?

What types of sexual relationships with women do men your age want to have?

What types of relationship issues are men dealing with? What causes these issues?

Are intimate (romantic) relationships important to men your age? Are they important to your friends? Why or why not?

Section 2 (45 minutes)

Ver. 7/6/10

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Now, please think of 3 of your friends who are Black men about your age who are in a relationship with a woman.

How common is it for your friends to have sex with another woman while they're in a relationship , i.e. having sex with more than one woman at the same time?

Would men in your community consider this cheating? Why? Why not?

What are some reasons men have sex with another woman while they are in a relationship?

What are some reasons men <u>would not</u> do this?

If you were talking to your friend, who was having sex with two or more woman, what would you say to him?

What would it take for your friend to stop?

Now let's switch things around.

How common is it for the woman your friend's having sex with – whatever the nature of the relationship – to also have sex with another man while she's in the relationship with your friend?

When your friends talk about this type of relationship, where the woman is having sex with another man, what do they say?

Would men in your community consider this cheating? Why? Why not?

What are some reasons that men your age <u>would</u> stay in relationships with women who have sex with other men?

Can you think of any reasons why men your age <u>would not</u> stay in a relationship like this?

What do you think it would take for him to end the relationship?

What would be the most important things to him if he were thinking about ending the relationship?

Would you encourage your friend to end the relationship? Why?

What would you say?

Ver. 7/6/10

If this situation ever happened <u>to you</u>, what would you do?

Thinking back to men who have relationships with women who are not faithful and thinking about men who are not faithful to their women, what makes these types of relationships work for people?

Section 3 (15 minutes)

Now, let's change the subject a little.

Is having safe sex a concern for people your age?

What are the primary ways people your age practice safe sex? (Probe for using condoms, abstinence, monogamy, getting tested)

Do you think most folks you know are doing these things? Why? Why not?

Now let's talk about the HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

What do you think the chances of getting HIV are for your friends? What about your friends who have sex with multiple women? What are their chances of getting HIV if their female partner is having sex with other men? Higher? Lower? Why?

Having a sexual partner who messes around with other men or if you mess around with other women while you are in a relationship, you are at higher risk for getting HIV. We would like to let people know about this risk.

What kinds of things should we say to people your age to let them know about this?

What kinds of messages would turn people off? (What should we not say?)

Before we finish, I want to share some ideas for messages that We came up with. As I read them, I'd like you to think about what you like and dislike about them and how you think others in your community might feel about them. Or change their own behavior to have sex with only one partner at a time?

(Read a message)

What do you like about this message?

What do you dislike about it?

How do you think others would react to it?

Ver. 7/6/10

How likely is it that this message would actually help other men your age end relationships with women who are having sex with other men?

What would you change about this message?

(Repeat with other messages)

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Thank you for your participation. The information you have provided will be very useful in identifying the issues that African Americans are facing in this area. We are going to have similar discussions with people from other parts of the community. Then we will work on public service announcements to address reducing concurrent sexual partnerships among African Americans in Edgecombe, Green, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, Pitt, and Wilson Counties.

Is there anything else we should talk about on messages to reduce overlapping sexual partnerships?

Do you have any questions?

Again, thank you for your participation.

We also have a demographic survey that we would like for you to fill out. It's anonymous.

Please fill it out and give it to (the notetaker/payment person) when you pick up your $25 at the table (or from _____).

Ver. 7/6/10

Opportunity Matters: A Mixed Methods Study of Socioeconomic Position, Masculinity, and Sexual Concurrency among Black Men

CODEBOOK

Code: BMLMC_Respectability_Masculinity

Definition: Men's display of masculine strength by procuring (or appearing to procure) stable employment, excelling academically, gaining home ownership, achieving financial stability, or flaunting symbols of financial success (e.g., jewelry, cars).

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the socioeconomic accomplishments or symbols of socioeconomic standing (employment, home ownership, etc.) of men which would earn them respect and admiration from the people in their community or increase those people's perceptions of his manhood/masculinity.

Example:
MOD: And I mean the ones who don't fall for it.

M: The ones that fall for it, they're just stupid.

MOD: Oh, those are the ones you don't want a relationship with?

M: Yeah. You don't really want a relationship with them type of chicks, man.

M: And I don't mean no disrespect to the black woman, all I'm saying is it's like – it's easy to front off the trail roll and what I mean by front or all the girls fall for it, it's because at the time, it looks right. Like if I do something, like if I go borrow my friend's car and it just happen I'm in the mall and she come up and she's like, "Whose car?" the average guy's not going to say, "It's my friend's," or, "It's my brother's." You got to front. You got to wear that title like it's your car. So you got them that way. Then they come to find out, that wasn't his car, like you said, you lied to them in the beginning, you fronted at the time and you didn't really mean to, you didn't know it was going to go that far. That's why I said like you fronted in the beginning of the relationship and then you start it off a bad approach.

_____

Code: BMLMC_Reputational_Masculinity

Definition: Men's display of masculine strength and procurement of social status among peers by risk-taking engagement, such as "out-drinking" them when consuming alcohol, through sexual conquest, and other behaviors linked to displaying one's capacity to compete and win (i.e., winning sports competitions and games).

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about behaviors that men engage in to gain social status among their peers or to enhance their own self-sense of their manhood, including the capacity for risk-taking, competition, and sexual achievement.

Example:

MOD: Why are they doing this? I mean during the relationship? Why? I'm just trying to – why.

M: Some people like the excitement.

M: Yeah. It's excitement –

M: Yeah.

M: And yet they just – that's all they want to do.

M: I mean it's there, the opportunity there.

M: They don't get that –

M: That's all it is, opportunity.

MOD: One second. I'm going to get in trouble with the tapes if – because – yeah. I got to consider that. What were you going to say [Identifier-Name]?

M: It's more about bragging rights.

MOD: Men want bragging rights.

M: Yeah. He's the man with the quote-unquote, he got beat. He got more. He got more brothers around, like, okay, I'm chilling with him, I know he got those, that's what he do.

SUPER CODE: CONCURRENCY

Code: Concurrency_Description

Definition: The words or phrases that are used by men to describe concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about how sexual concurrency is described by men, what they would consider sexual concurrency (cheating), and what they would not consider sexual concurrency (cheating). This code should include responses to the question regarding what comes to mind when hearing the words "overlapping sexual partnerships."

Example

MOD: So do you think the term is a little confusing or you think it's not? Because it sounds like you don't think it sounds clear.

M: What? As far as overlapping?

MOD: Yeah.

M: Yeah, that don't sound all that clear.

M: Yeah, it ain't clear.

M: Choose a better word.

MOD: Okay. What would be a better word for, you know, what would be a better way of describing that? A guy who's—

M: Juggling.

MOD: Juggling females at the same time.

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M: It's different words can describe it.

MOD: What are the words?

M: You got, what, pimp, player—

MOD: pimp, player—

M: Male whore.

MOD: What did you say?

M: Male whore.

M: Jiggalo

MOD: What did you say? I'm sorry. I can't—

M: Casanova.

MOD: Casanova. How about you, [Identifier-Name]? What are some other ways or better ways of describing?

M: Basically whoever in the relationship just cheating.

MOD: Just cheating?

M: Yeah.

_____

Code: Concurrency_Facilitators_Individual

Definition: The individual-level factors that make it possible and/or easier for men to engage in concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the traits and characteristics of individuals (for example: "has money," smooth talker, flashy dresser) which makes it possible to have a sexually concurrent relationships.

Example

M: It can be an addiction, man, people having problems like people addicted to cigarettes and everything else; sex could be the same thing. For some people, it's easier to just say, "I'm through with it," and for some people, you got to just be with two and three different people.

M: Daily.

M: Daily.

M: For real.

_____

Code: Concurrency_Facilitators_Structural

Definition: The social and environmental factors that make it possible and/or easier for men to engage in concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about structural factors (i.e., lack of access to gainful employment) which influence Black men's engagement in concurrency.

Example

MODF: Actually this other question is can you think of anything in the community that encourages the types of relationships where men are having multiple relationships with women at the same time? Is there anything-?

M: Club.

M: Bar.

MODF: How do the clubs do it?

M: You can go meet somewhere.

M: You can meet a lot of women at clubs if you ain't there with your mate. It's going down at clubs.

MODF: So one thing is the clubs.

M: The social environment probably.

M: Clubs.

_____

Code: Concurrency_Reasons_Against

Definition: The factors that would deter men from engaging in concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the reasons why men would not start engaging in concurrency or why they would end their concurrent relationships.

Example:
MOD: What are some of the reasons men would not do this? Give me some good reasons why men – I'm going to start over here with [Identifier-Name] – why are some reasons men would not mess around outside the relationship?
M: They got to be really set on what they want in life and focused and really stable in their situation, know what they want, and all their needs have been met in that relationship that they in already and basically, that got to be in it.

_____

Code: Concurrency_Reasons_For

Definition: The factors that would facilitate men engaging in concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the reasons why men would start engaging in sexual concurrency.

Example:
MOD: What are some of the reasons men have sex with another woman while they're in a relationship? What are some of the reasons?
M: The other girl doing something the other one won't.
M: Basically.

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SUPER CODE: MASCULINE ROLE STRAIN (MRS)

</div>

Code: MRS_Affective_Experiences

Definition: The negative consequences arising from emotional conflicts about gender roles.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion men had about experiences of stress or negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, critical) arising from their attempts and/or failures to fulfill traditional masculine gender roles.

Example:
MOD: So how other the ways are relationships between black men and black women portrayed on the media?
M: It's kind of like I was saying earlier, negatively, because the black woman always getting on her husband and she always telling him what to do. You never see them communicating on a level to where both of them are equal. You know what I'm saying? It's like the woman have all the power and we just like stupid little dogs that follow, I mean that's what I get from, I mean we just like –
M: You know, like we just lagging around like the only reason we there is because they giving up the booty, you know what I'm saying? Like we have no mind of our own, rather like. You see what I'm saying?--.
M: Can I add on to that?
MOD: Sure.
M: I'm saying like some husbands like you be looking at someone like – it's like real, really tough, it's hard out there for being a black man; it's real hard out there. So you may be looking at something like on the movie or something and like a man, he trying his best, but he broke, but he's trying his best. He's trying to do his duties or whatever, and some other man may come along, he maybe got money. Like TV, it plays a major thing with someone's mind who really don't have the proper knowledge to maintain. You know what I'm saying? And women like material things, she want to be taken to the nicest restaurant and stuff, but that man who really can't do that like that, he just trying to take care of home first. Another man come in there and slide in there, he got that, but really he really don't love her, he just you know what I'm saying, he just buying you really. A prostitute really.

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Code: MRS_Behaviors

Definition: Men's' actions, reactions to situations (e.g., relationship dissatisfaction), and interactions with themselves and others based on their gender ideologies.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion the men had about their behavior or expected behavior given their own gender role expectations and ideologies about what it means to be a man.

Example:
MOD: I'm talking about think about situations that you know of. And some of these, you may not know exactly why, but this is someone you know, they're doing this, I just want to know why would someone do this? I'm assuming they're in a relationship –
M: Nature, man.
MOD: What'd you say?
M: Just nature. It nature.
MOD: It's nature? They just –
M: Things happen.
MOD: – doing what comes natural?
M: Yeah.
MOD: Probably because they're not happy. Okay.
M: not happy but they don't want to let that girl go neither.
M: Yeah. Because I say because the opportunity presents itself.
M: Nature. We humans, man.
M: If a male – 9 times out of 10, if a male is approached by a female or if a male gets the word that a female likes him or want to do something with him, I mean 9 times out of 10, he's going to pursue it.

_____

Code: MRS_Cognitions

Definition: Men's restrictive gender views and stereotypical attitudes about gender

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion men had about experiences of stress or negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, critical) arising from their restrictive gender views and stereotypical attitudes about gender. Do not apply this code to discussions about their individual attempts or failures to fulfill traditional gender views.

Example:
MOD: Now, you said there aren't any strong woman, what does that mean?

M: I mean because like I said, man, when you got a hard working woman, she going to have her limits. You understand what I'm saying? Like, "Well, I'm not going to do this today. I'm not going to do that today. And I'm not going to do this." What I supposed to do?

M: Man, you not going to like it.

M: Thank you. What I supposed to do?

M: To an extent on the question that you asked –

M: Because a man, a man can work 12 hours a day and still come home every day and beat it [smacking hands together], every day [smacking hands together]. A woman work 12, 13 hours a day and she come home, she tired.

M: Don't want to do nothing.

M: So how you going to keep me happy.

M: It's not critical like it used to be--

[Laughter]

_____

Code: MRS_Financial

Definition: The negative consequences arising from men's inability to achieve a desired level of financial stability or success.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion men had about experiences of stress or negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger, critical) arising from their attempts and/or failures to provide financially for themselves and/or romantic partners.

Example:

MOD: What types of relationship issues are men dealing with – I interrupted you.

M: Well basically like what my man said trust issues definitely is the issues part right there.

M: Like financial, that plays a part, too. But stop before you come into a relationship, you got to look at the product that you dealing with. If you got her through material things, that's what you going to have to keep doing.

M: Yeah, keep doing. You got to keep doing.

M: When you come to her real, she understand your struggle and you're trying to get it right, she trying to build that heaven on earth with you, .

M: Maybe then you all will make it.

MOD: Anything else I'm missing? Go ahead.

M: I was thinking communications. Like he was saying--

M: That's the key.

M: -- If you go and be – like he was saying, be real with her and you got to be real with each other, then that will establish the trust. And then along with that, if you had money or if you got money, then to me, if y'all communicate, she'll know where I can't spend all the money because it's for this, or we need this or we need that. She may find a better way to help both of y'all out. Like say the car note due and the rent due. She may know of a way where y'all can get more money where you can't see a way. You see what I'm saying? So, in a way, if the

communication – if you don't start with communication, then the whole relationship is going to be gone.

M: Mm-hmm.

M: That true.

_____

Code: MRS_Masculinity_Ideology

Definition: Men's internalization and endorsement of cultural belief systems and attitudes toward what a man is and/or does.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion the men had concerning their individual beliefs about the traits/characteristics of a man or the behaviors that a man should engage in.

Example:

MODF: So you don't like the definition of real men?

M: Nah.

MODF: And you didn't like the issue of the past, it sounded –

M: Yeah. Real men. It should have been in –

MODF: What would you say instead?

M: I think the ones –

M: You could say good men.

M: Good men.

M: Good men. Good men. Good men.

M: Ideally.

M: Yeah, ideally, a good man. You know what I'm saying? Because a real man take care of his home regardless of what he doing on the side.

MODF: So even if he has multiple partners –

M: Yeah. That don't – yeah.

MODF: I see.

M: As long as he perform his duties, that's a man.

MODF: Mm-hmm.

M: That makes him a real man.

M: Responsibility.

M: And that boils down to the fact of why she still in a relationship with a man that cheats, because he's a good man, he's a real man – but he's a real man. He provides. He's a provider. But the ideal for a good man, that's really what a woman's looking for. Not necessarily a real man. Because you got independent women out here that doesn't need a provider, they just –

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Code: MRS_Masculinity_Ideology_BigWheel

Definition: Men's endeavoring to be respected for and qualifying their masculinity through successful financial achievement (e.g., fulfilling the role of the breadwinner/provider)

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion of men's defining masculinity as the provision of financial supports to oneself, romantic partner, or family.

Example:
MOD: How about, "A good man has only one partner?"
M: Same thing.
M: Same thing.
M: That's exactly the same thing.
M: It don't make you a good man because you have one partner. I take care of my kids, I went to child support, my kids, they with me. I pay all the bills. I'm a good man on the perspective part of my responsibility. But sexual-wise don't make me a good man because I'm laying down with one woman. I could be faithful to this woman, but that ain't paying my bills –

_____

Code: MRS_Masculinity_Ideology_GiveHell

Definition: Men's seeking risk and adventure and accepting violence, if necessary, as a means of demonstrating their masculinity.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion of taking risks as a means of demonstrating their manhood or as a result of masculinity ideologies.

Example:
MOD: About the fact that you—I'm gonna pick on you, [Identifier-Name]—the fact that [Identifier-Name] is dealing with two or three different women or more increases his risk significantly of getting HIV as well as the women in his network of women.
M: I tell them to do the research. Open your eyes.
M: Drive slow homie.
MOD: Pardon?
M: Drive slow homie.
MOD: Drive slow homie? What kinds of things should we say to people your age to let them know?
M: I mean I'd tell them straight up.
M: Watch who you're messing with.
M: Watch who you're overlap?
MOD: It's not even so much watch who you overlap with. Just the fact that—
M: You don't overlap. Overlapping is bad.
MOD: Right.
M: Tell them that. Tell them.
MOD: All right. Because what do you think would work? I mean seriously think about your peers. How would people respond to someone saying, "look, don't mess around with more than one woman"?
M: We know the outcome of it. But we just—I ain't gonna say we but people just do it. They know the outcome of like overlapping, I mean, but they just do it. It's just a way of life.

MODF: So suppose one of the issues is that this is the reason why, this particular pattern of having relationships helps spread HIV infection through the black community very efficiently. In fact it's probably one of the big reasons why black people in general have higher rates of HIV.
MOD: Absolutely.
MODF: So what would [cough] that was directed at men that let them know that this type of behavior was causing a problem in the black community, even if wasn't causing problems for them directly, but this was causing a problem in the black community. Would that message mean anything to young black men your age or not?
M: It all depends on who's saying it and how they saying it.
M: It depends on who you talking to as well. If you're talking to a little hard head then it's just going to go in one ear and out the other]—
_____

Code: MRS_Masculinity_Ideology_NoSissy

Definition: Men's avoidance of femininity and concealing of emotions as a means of demonstrating their manhood or as a result of masculinity ideologies.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion where men converse about their inability or unwillingness to share their emotions and feelings with others. Also, apply this code to any conversation where the men define masculinity/manhood using anti-femininity language.

Example:
MOD: Now, the girl that you care about, do you have a relationship with her? Is she your girlfriend?

M: Nah.

M: Nah.

M: No commitment.

MOD: No commitment?

M: I mean, some – you might hold back. You might hold back. You might not want to tell her how you feel about her. She might not be on the same page.

M: Yeah, yeah. Have that wall up.

M: Exactly. So you don't want to just throw it out there and she reject it. Like, "No, that ain't what I want.

M: Yeah.
_____

Code: MRS_Masculinity_Ideology_SturdyOak

Definition: Men's attempts to exude confidence, look tough, and never show weakness as a means of demonstrating their masculinity/manhood.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion where participants define manhood/masculinity as being strong, capable of performing tasks, and self-assured in one's own abilities.

Example:
MODF: Does anybody want to hear any of those again? That was kind of fast.
M: No.
M: Nah.
M: No.
M: – can read it.
M: Yeah.
M: If you a man and can't read, you dumb. You a fool. You don't need to be in here. Simple as that.
M: Yeah, not too lazy.
M: I said it.

_____

Code: MRS_Masculinity_Norms

Definition: Shared cultural belief systems and attitudes toward what constitutes ideal traits and behaviors of men.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about how manhood and masculinity are defined by/in the communities in which the men live. Also apply this code to discussion about how manhood and masculinity are defined in the media or popular culture.

Example:
MOD: How do you and your friends talk about overlapping sexual partnerships and messing around?
M: You said how they talk?
MOD: Yeah. How do your friends talk about it?
M: Conversation just flows.
M: We just talk.
M: Lay it on the line, you know.
M: It ain't all that fun to talk about it no more.
MOD: Why? You said people don't talk. Why?
M: Because everybody doing it.
M: Basically, everybody's doing it

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Code: MISC_Intervention

Definition: Strategies that would be useful for getting men to reduce or stop their engagement in sexual concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion the participants had about how to get men to reduce/eliminate their engagement in concurrency. Also apply this code to any discussions of the reasons cited for why men would not engage in sexual concurrency.

Example:
MOD: Let me ask you, just to make sure I follow through on that one comment. You said it depends on who says it and how they say it.
M: Yeah. Because I can go in the community and be like, "Stop having sex because it gives you AIDS" but if TI go in there they gonna run to TI like, okay, I'm going to follow what he said.
MOD: Who's TI?
M: He a rapper.
MOD: Oh, TI. I'm sorry. I was like TI? I know I'm out of the loop but—so, you think a well-known person like TI who's popular.
M: A person like higher.
M: It gotta be somebody like that is going to influence them. You don't influence them, you get no doors open.
M: I think tell them on TV.
M: Yeah.
M: They got commercials for it.
MODF: So two questions. If you can't get a celebrity like that to do it, what kinds of people?
M: You can. Just try to get most celebrities. They already do that though. I say like a good motivator person.
M: Yeah.
M: Somebody who they know.
MODF: Would you be more interested in what a national celebrity says, like TI, or somebody who's a local celebrity?
M: For the black community—
M: I go with local because anybody can just give you a message but somebody that's local, they looking out themself.
MODF: So a local celebrity.
M: You have to get Barack Obama to do it. For real. For the black community. You know what I'm saying? Because a whole lot of people look up to him because of his placement in the USA and stuff like that. Get him to tell it and see what happens.

_____

Code: MISC_Relationships_Desired

Definition: Description of the desired forms of romantic and other relationships men want to have with women.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the ideal relationships, romantic or otherwise, that men want to have with women. This can be used to capture words or phrases to describe the types of relationships men want to have with women, how they'd like to be treated by the woman they're in a relationship with, or any other information addressing how men would like to interact with women within the context of a relationship.

Example
MOD: Okay. How about you, [Identifier-Name]?

M: I misunderstood. Like everything, I thought, open to me is when I come ask you something you tell me the truth right then and there and vice versa. Ain't no need to hide no lies. You lie to me one time you gonna lie again. If I ain't got that trust with you then I'm done with you.

M: That's a committed relationship.

M: That's committed but that's what most guys want out of the females. But these days and times you can't find anybody like that.

MOD: But it's like I told you, I suspected open means something different for everyone. So this is good. So you're saying, you're talking about open in terms of communication?

M: Like if I find out I hear you do something, I come ask you and you lie and I find out later it's the truth, then I mean open like when I ask you the first time you tell me right then and there. That's what I mean by open.

MOD: Open by honesty, communication.

M: I mean you ain't got that, what you got?

M: Nothing.

M: Why do I want to settle down with you if I can't even trust you? That's a wasting of my time.
_____

Code: MISC_Relationship_Dissatisfaction

Definition: Men's unhappiness with the emotional or physical (i.e. sexual) state of their romantic and/or sexual relationship.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about men's disappointment or displeasure with the quality or state of their romantic/sexual relationship with their partners.

Example:
MOD: Let me see quick. Who thinks it's common amongst people that you know? It could be your best friend, you know, three guys that you know. So, you think it's pretty common?
M: Yeah. Even if you don't know, they doing it.
MOD: So you just assume they doing it.
M: They are. They absolutely are.

MOD: Okay. So, why?
M: Not satisfied.
M: Yeah. Maybe the next girl is doing something his girl ain't doing.
M: She said no too many times. Have to go find another.
_____

Code: MISC_Socioeconomic_Position

Definition: The measure of a man's economic and social position in relation to others, based on their income, education, occupation, and home ownership status.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about men's jobs, income, level of education, home ownership status, or other information regarding their financial standing.

Example:
MOD: Seriously, every day? Do you think women approach –?
M: Every day.
MOD: Now, will a woman approach a man knowing that he has a woman?
M: Yeah. Especially.
MOD: Especially?
M: That's when they want you the most.
M: Yeah.
M: Yeah.
M: – have some money. Basically they get jealous of the other woman so they all want to take her place anyway because they know you already have some money. So they going to act like we position around so they can take her place
MOD: So you're saying especially if he has some money?
M: Basically.
MOD: Okay.
M: if you ain't got no money in this world, you ain't got anything.
MOD: Okay. So if someone's doing all right –
M: Yeah.

<table>
<tr><td>SUPER CODE: SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY</td></tr>
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Code: SCT_Modeling_Media

Definition: Media depictions of sexual concurrency or concurrency-related issues among Black men.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about sexual concurrency among Black men (i.e., reasons for concurrency, outcomes of concurrency, types of concurrency, etc.)

Example:

MOD: How are relationships between black men and women portrayed?

M: They we all dogs.

M: We can't be faithful.

M: That men are all dogs and women are hos -

M: That we the blame why each other go to the opposite race. We treat our women like dogs, that's why they date other women.

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Code: SCT_Modeling_Family

Definition: The traits/characteristics and behaviors of manhood and masculinity demonstrated by the men's male family members or other males in their lives.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about how the men's perceive manhood/masculinity based upon their observation of the characteristics and behaviors of the men in their lives (e.g. fathers, males friends)

Example:

M: My parents have been married for 40 some odd years, I still dropped my dad off at the other woman's house. Some people might think that wrong, but I feel like this, out of the year's I've known him, I've never seen chase a woman, call my mom by the name, never put a hands on her, everything she's asked, for he's end up getting it]. So I feel like –

M: That's what it is.

M: Cheating keep relationships together, bro.

_____

Code: SCT_Moral_Disengagement

Definition: Persuasive reasons used to justify engagement in sexual concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to discussions on all of the reasons the men cite for engaging in sexual concurrency. Special attention should be paid to the reasons where the men blame their partners for the men's engagement in concurrency (e.g. partner not fulfilling men's sexual expectations).

Example:

M: He's got a reason for doing that. He must be missing fulfillment] or something from that place, so he seeking more. Pretty much.

M: Yeah. Because if you got it at home, I'm pretty-- 9 times out of 10 – everybody not going to continue to play the game. Because if got it at home, I ain't going to front. I ain't going nowhere but she really got to meet all my requirements. That's within. And have me feeling like, "Oh, I ain't going nowhere." She got to be that perfect one for the person.

MOD: What you guys think? [Identifier-Name], what do you guys think? What do you think, [Identifier-Name]?

M: I mean I'm not going to sleep on a nice girlfriend.

MOD: You would sleep around?

M: No, I wouldn't. I'm saying like the example you use.

MOD: That's [Identifier-Name]'s girlfriend.

M: Oh, his girlfriend.

MOD: That's his girlfriend. That's who he's with most of the time, except [Identifier-Name] just – you're like, "Man, why is [Identifier-Name] – where is [Identifier-Name] going?"

M: Like I said, if I do say something, I'm just throwing it out there, let him know that, look, you got a good girl. You know what I'm saying?

MOD: So that's [Identifier-Name]. I'm just wondering – because I want to make clear, when I said, "Would you say something?" it's not, okay, [Identifier-Name]'s messing around, just running around, but [Identifier-Name]'s in a relationship. Would you guys –

M: I talk to him about it.

M: Yeah. I would talk to him about it. Especially you got a good girl; you know what I'm saying. But if she's something just average. Do what you do, I won't say nothing.

_____

Code: SCT_Outcome_Expectations

Definition: Men's beliefs about what will be the consequences of their engagement in sexual concurrency.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about men's beliefs about the physical or emotional results of engaging in sexual concurrency.

Example:

MOD: What do you think, [Identifier-Name]? What are some reasons guys cheat?

M: Satisfy their needs because—yeah.

MOD: What needs?

M: Got to be sexual because, I mean, you can be with the same girl for years and years. Y'all doing the same thing. You go to another girl and she can do it better.

M: Do a trick. [Laughter]

_____

Code: SCT_Values

Definition: Men's principles or standards of behaviors; their judgment of what is important in life.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about beliefs which may impact/guide men's sexual concurrency behavior.

Example:

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MOD: What do you think, [Identifier-Name], why would a man not mess around outside his relationship?

M: I guess he not being selfish.

MOD: He's not being selfish?

M: Not being selfish, having consideration for his partner.

M: I agree 100% with what he said, 100%. Everything –

MOD: Which parts?

M: Everything he said. If you were the person and y'all share a special bond and she have everything you need far as like the love, the – I mean –

M: Trust.

M: – everything. Like, it's there; you know what I'm saying? She the type of woman you want to be with. Because that counts a lot, too. You ain't going to be with nobody that you really don't want to be with. You got to want to be with the person. You got to have respect for the person. You got to love the person. Not being selfish. Knows about her.

_____

Code: SCT_Self_Efficacy

Definition: Men's knowledge of the social and health risk of concurrency and skills to engage in behaviors which reduce or eliminate those risks.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion the men had about the HIV/STI risk of engaging in concurrency and the skills they use to avoid those risks.

Example:

MOD: What are some reasons men would not do this?

M: Diseases.

M: Yeah.

MOD: Diseases?

M: Yeah.

MOD: Why wouldn't guys do it?

M: Scared to get that monkey.

M: Yeah.

M: Rumors

MOD: Scared to get the monkey?

M: AIDS

_____

Code: SCT_Self_Regulation

Definition: Men's ability to control their desire to seek masculine strength through reputational men's and/or romantic/sexual satisfaction from more than one partner.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the mechanisms men use to prevent themselves from engaging in sexual concurrency.

Example:
MOD: You guys are a little older now, you're not in high school. How have you guys changed in terms of relationships –
M: Respecting myself.
M: Love myself first.
M: It's about a self thing and I care about my health, and beside me smoking cigarettes, but dealing with the jump off, and all that, you got to wrap it up, but pleasure is pleasure. You can't get it at home, if you can't get it at home, you going to go elsewhere to get it.
M: Mm-hmm.
M: That's it.
M: Me myself, I got two kids now so it's totally new ballgame. Now, you can't just go there in this bed and then come home and be with your kids. It's no telling what you going give to them, so you got to protect them also. So I'm looking at a totally different, I don't care how good you look, baby, you've got to have. I don't care what your face look like, how good you smell at this moment, I could go to your house and see diapers and stuff and all that, it's a new ballgame because I've got kids now. Not only myself. I got to look out for them. I don't bring women around them because I don't want them to see that situation and think daddy do it, it's cool for me to do it. So I got to separate that.

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SUPER CODE: TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF STRESS AND COPING (TMSC)

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Code: TMSC_Coping

Definition: Strategies used by men to contend with people and situations which cause them mental/emotional strain or trauma.

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about how men deal individuals and circumstances which cause them distress.

Example:
MOD: Are intimate, romantic relationships important to men your age? Let me see a quick show of hands, who says yes? One, two, three, four – five. Okay. So half. I'm not going to include – [Identifier-Name]. [Identifier-Name] was like, ehhh –
M: Halfway.
MOD: So half, why? Why or why not? How are you guys reading into that?
M: It helps you get about your day. You go about your day easy. A lot of things, you know stress, it helps you feel better. So a little intimacy goes a long ways.
_____

Code: TMSC_Stressor

Definition: Physiological and/or psychological demands on an individual, that are internal or external to the individual, which may disrupt their life balance and result in negative physical and psychological health outcomes

Guidance: Apply this code to any discussion about the people or situations which cause the men mental, emotional, or physical strain/trauma.

Example:
MOD: All right. Because there's some things – now, why did everybody laugh when he said stress?
M: Because it's true.
M: It's true.
M: It's true.
M: It's true.
MOD: Why is a relationship stress?
M: It take a toll, man, take a toll.
M: Everything.
M: Everything.
MOD: Everything?
M: Everything.
MOD: Okay.
M: Because a woman is a woman, you can't give her enough man.
_____

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